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The Annotated Bible

The Holy Scriptures Analysed and Annotated

BY

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Editor of "Our Hope"

Volume II

Joshua to Chronicles

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JOSHUA

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The Book of Joshua.

Introduction.

The Book of Joshua heads in the Hebrew arrangement of the Old Testament Scriptures, that division which is called "the former Prophets." It is the first book in the Bible, which bears in its title the name of a person.

Joshua means "Jehovah is Saviour"; the Greek name for Joshua is Jesus. In our study of the previous books, beginning with Exodus, we have met his name at different times and have learned much of this great man of God. He was the Son of Nun, an Ephraimite (Num. xiii:8), grandson of Elishama (1 Chron. vii:26–27). In Exodus we saw him as the leader of Israel against Amalek. He is mentioned as Moses' servant and attendant (Ex. xxiv:13; xxxii:17–18); as the servant of Moses, he did not depart out of the tabernacle (Ex. xxxiii:11). He went with Moses, up into the mount of God.

We meet him again in Num. xi:27–29. In Num. xiii:9, 17 we find him as one of the spies sent to Canaan. With Caleb he had confidence in God and His promises,and bravely exhorted the people to trust the Lord and go forward. His name, however, is not given at all during the thirty-eight years' wandering in the wilderness. In Deuteronomy he is divinely pointed out as Moses' successor. Moses and Joshua presented themselves in the tabernacle of the congregation, and after the Lord had announced the approaching death of Moses, Joshua hears the charge from the lips of the passing leader of God's people. "Be strong and of a good courage; for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land, which I sware unto them; and I will be with thee" (Deut. xxxi:23). In the analysis and annotations of the book itself we shall have abundant occasion to study the character of Joshua more fully.

The Authorship of the Book.

Jewish tradition makes Joshua the author of the book which bears his name. There is no reason why this should be denied. No other person was more fitted to write down the great events, connected with the entrance of Israel into the land, than Joshua. As Moses by inspiration wrote the account of how the Lord brought out His people from Egypt, so Joshua is the instrument, divinely chosen and equipped, to give the story of how the Lord brought them in. That another person should be the author of the book of Joshua appears unreasonable.

The modern critics, however, deny that Joshua had anything whatever to do with the book as we possess it. These wise men have discovered what equally learned and pious men of passed generations, seemingly, did not know. They tell us that the date of the composition of Joshua is very late and that it is not the work of one man at all, but a compilation from the same sources that have been utilized in the Pentateuch. These are termed Jehovist* (J.); Elohist (E.); Priestly Code (P.); Deuteronomist (D.) and still another Deuteronomist, termed D^2. This so-called "Science," higher Criticism, tries to show which is which. And to these must be added a number of redactors, revisors and editors, who all had a hand in putting the book of Joshua into the shape in which we have it now. Well has it been said:

"One is tempted to say of this complicated but confidently maintained scheme, that it it just too complete, too wonderfully finished, too clever by half. Allowing most cordially the remarkable ability and ingenuity of its authors, we can hardly be expected to concede to them the power of taking to pieces a book of such vast antiquity, putting it in a modern mincing machine, dividing it among so many supposed

*The letters behind the names are used by the Critic to indicate these different sources. W. H. Bennett in 1895 published Joshua in a number of colors, indicating the various documents.

writers, and settling the exact parts of it written by each!"

And now we must mention in connection with the authorship of the Book of Joshua, the Hexateuch theory.

The Hexateuch Theory.

The word "Hexateuch" means "six-fold book." The five books written by Moses, Genesis to Deuteronomy, are called "Pentateuch," that is, "five-fold book." The critics claim that the book of Joshua belongs properly to the five books of the law, thereby adding a sixth book. This combination they call the Hexateuch. In itself this appears harmless. However, a closer examination reveals that this invention is the offspring of unbelief. They call attention to the fact that throughout the Pentateuch the land of Canaan and its final conquest and inheritance by Israel is mentioned and presupposed. The following passages are generally pointed out: Gen. xiii:14–17; xv:13–16; xxvi: 3; xxviii:13–15; Ex. iii:8, 17; xxxii:13; xxxiii:1–3; Num. xiii:17; xxvii:18–23; Deut. i:38; iii:21; xxxi:3–6. Upon those passages predicting the future occupation and possession of Canaan, the critics base the claim that the same person or persons who wrote the Pentateuch must have also written the book of Joshua. We quote the exact words of one of the leading critics. "It is self-evident that a writer who has commenced his narrative by the brilliant promises made to the patriarchs, is bound to conclude it by showing us their accomplishment; to say the least, it would be impossible for him to pass that accomplishment in silence."

Such a claim involves the denial of the possibility of prediction of future events. This denial is in very fact the whole foundation of the destructive criticism of the Bible; and such a denial is unbelief. To explain, in a scientific way, as it is termed, the predictions found in the Bible, all kinds of theories have been invented. These theories attempt to explain away the supernatural in the Word of God. Thus different Isaiahs have been invented, because

the one Isaiah, who wrote the book which bears his name, must be denied an account of such a marvellous prediction as the mention of Cyrus, the King unborn, when Isaiah lived. Daniel is rejected as the author of the book of Daniel and a "pious Jew" (without a definite name) living hundreds of years after Daniel, has to pose as the author of that prophetic book, because, according to the critics, Daniel could not have foretold the events recorded in his prophecies. And the book of Joshua, for the same reason, must have been composed by the same author or authors, compiler or compilers of the Pentateuch. Of course the critics deny that Moses had anything to do with the writing of the first five books of the Bible. If they were to assign the composition of the book of Joshua to Joshua, and the Pentateuch to Moses, the denial, that there can be no genuine prediction, could not be sustained. And this supposed "Hexateuch," the six-fold book, is relegated to a very late period.

But all this Hexateuchal invention is easily disproven. The Hebrews always reverenced the five books, universally ascribed to Moses. They look upon them, and rightly so, as standing by themselves in solitary grandeur. The Hebrew Old Testament has three parts, *Thora* (Pentateuch), *Neviim* (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah to Malachi, except Daniel) and *Kethubim* (Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles). To link Joshua with the five books of Moses is a thing unknown among the Hebrews. The book of Joshua was never bound together with the Law. No manuscript has ever been found which links Joshua with the Pentateuch. The Pentateuch always stood alone by itself and was jealously guarded by the Hebrews. The Critics are unable to furnish any proof that originally the Pentateuch and Joshua were combined.

We state another fact, which overthrows the Hexateuch theory. The Pentateuch is the model of the entire Bible. The five-fold division can be traced in both Testaments. The Book of Psalms, for instance, in the Hebrew Bible has five divisions. The ancient Hebrews called therefore the

Psalms "the Pentateuch of David." Each division corresponds in a remarkable degree with the character of the different books written by Moses. The New Testament also has five parts which correspond to the Pentateuch.* All this shows that the Hexateuch is a man-made theory pure and simple. It is invented by such, who refuse to accept the supernatural in the Bible.

We cannot follow the different other objections made against the book of Joshua, as being written by Joshua. These objections are easily answered and we need not to burden our readers with these controversial matters which are of no value at all. We shall, however, in our annotations, call attention to some questions raised by the Critics. The study of the book itself will furnish continued evidence, that it is written by inspiration.

The Historical Events and their Typical Meaning.

The Book of Joshua records the entrance of the people Israel into the promised land, how this entrance was effected by the power of God, the conflicts which arose when they came into the land, the partial conquest and the division of the land among the tribes. All this is fully given in our analysis and followed in the annotations of the different chapters.

There is no other historical book in the Bible so rich in typical foreshadowings as the book of Joshua. It is inexhaustible and full of blessed meaning and encouragement to every child of God, because these historical events typify Christian position, Christian experience and Christian conflict. We shall find that a part of Joshua illustrates for us in a typical way the Epistle to the Ephesians. We point out a few of the leading types; the annotations will give the details and touch upon others as well.

Joshua is, of course, a type of Him whose earthly

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*Gospels (Genesis); Acts (Exodus); Pauline Epistles (Leviticus); General Epistles (Numbers); Revelation (Deuteronomy).

Name he bears. He is the first one in the Word of God who bears that ever blessed Name. As already stated Joshua is the same as "Jesus," the Greek form for Joshua. Joshua therefore typifies Christ. The earthly people Israel typifyies the heavenly peoples and the earthly possession promised and given to Israel is the type of the heavenly possession given to His heavenly people. However, Canaan is not the type of heaven, the place into which the believer enters in the future. Canaan could not be the type of heaven for two reasons. The first is, Israel's conflict when they came into the land. They had to fight their way through the land. Their battles, so to speak, began after they had crossed Jordan. They got into the land without even lifting a single sword or spear. But no sooner were they in the land, their fighting began. This can never be said of heaven. When we reach the Father's house all conflicts will be forever ended and Satan will be completely bruised under our feet.

The second reason, why Canaan cannot mean heaven is, because Israel could be driven out of the land. This is not possible with heaven. It is impossible that the place into which God's Grace brings us could ever be lost to a child of God. Canaan is the type of the heavenly position and possession which the believer has in Christ Jesus. It corresponds to that which in Ephesians is called "in heavenly places," or as better rendered "in the heavenly." It is the heavenly sphere, the heavenly, spiritual blessings given to us in Christ Jesus.

Jordan is not the type of the death of the believer, but Jordan typifies in Joshua the death of Christ, by which we are separated unto this blessed heavenly possession. We are brought into it by the death of Christ, as Israel was brought into Canaan through the passage of Jordan.

The passage of Jordan, the erection of the memorial stones, the events at Gilgal, all find a most blessed typical application, illustrating our redemption in Christ as well as our privileges and responsibilities.

The enemies of Israel, the Canaanites, were usurpers

of a land which did not belong to them. They were steeped in wickedness. Immoralities of the most abominable nature were connected with their idolatries. They practised sorcery, divinations; they asked the dead and had familiar spirits. Satan and his demons had complete control over them. They are the types of the "wicked spirits" with which a heavenly people wage their warfare. See Ephesians vi:10–13. All these typical applications we shall make in the annotations.

The division of the land among the tribes has its many typical lessons for us, who are called to possess and enjoy our heavenly possession.

The Dispensational Aspect.

The Book of Joshua has also a marked dispensational aspect. Israel is yet to possess the promised land in the dimensions in which they never possessed it. God brought them in under Joshua, the second One. The first One, Moses, could not bring them in. When our Lord Jesus Christ appears the second time, He will gather His people from the wilderness of the nations and will give them the land and they shall occupy their full inheritance.

The fall of Jericho, the overthrow of Israel's enemies, the battle at Gibeon, the division of the land, the rest, which followed, all have their striking and most interesting dispensational meaning.

May it please God to make the study of the Book of Joshua a blessing to the hearts of His people.

The Division of the Book of Joshua.

The division of the Book of Joshua is not difficult to make. The opening chapters are taken up with a description of the entrance of the people into the promised land and the conflicts with the enemies. This is followed by the record of the division of the land among the tribes. The book closes with the last words of Joshua, as Deuteronomy closed with the final words of Moses. The death and burial of Joshua and a few other historical statements are added to the book. These, of course, were not written by Joshua.

I. THE ENTRANCE OF THE PEOPLE INTO CANAAN AND THE CONFLICTS. Chapters i–xii.

1. **The Entrance Commanded and Success Promised.** Chapter i.
2. **The Spies and Rahab's Faith.** Chapter ii.
3. **The Passage of Jordan.** Chapter iii.
4. **The Memorial Stones.** Chapter iv.
5. **At Gilgal.** Chapter v.
6. **The Fall of Jericho.** Chapter vi.
7. **Achan's Sin and Israel's Defeat.** Chapter vii.
8. **The Overthrow of Ai.** Chapter viii.
9. **The Gibeonites and their Victory.** Chapter ix.
10. **The Victorious Conquest.** Chapters x–xii.

II. THE DIVISION OF THE LAND. Chapters xiii–xxi.

1. **Instructions Given; the Two and a Half Tribes.** Chapter xiii.
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4. **The Portion of Ephraim.** Chapter xvi.
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III. THE FINAL WORDS OF JOSHUA. THE EPILOGUE.

1. **The Two and a Half Tribes.** Chapter xxii.
2. **Joshua's Two Addresses.** Chapter xxiii–xxiv:28.
3. **The Epilogue.** Chapter xxiv:29–33.

Analysis and Annotations.

I. The Entrance of the People into Canaan; the Conflicts.

Chapters i–xii

1. The Entrance Commanded and Success Promised.

CHAPTER I.

1. The Lord Speaks to Joshua. Vs. 1–9.
2. Joshua Speaks to the People. Vs. 10–15.
3. The Answer of the People. Vs. 16-18.

The little word "now" with which this book begins is in the Hebrew "and." It links the book with Deuteronomy and the other books of the Pentateuch. It also shows that the previous books were in existence, for the mention of Moses, his death, and Joshua, the minister of Moses, presupposes that the reader knows all about them. But there is a stronger evidence in the eighth verse of the chapter, that the Pentateuch was then completely written. The term "This book of the law" applies to the five books written by Moses.

Joshua begins with the statement of Moses' death and ends with the record of Joshua's death. The book which follows, the book of Judges, begins with the statement of Joshua's death. Moses and Joshua are closely linked together. Both are beautiful types of the Lord Jesus Christ. Moses, the servant, is the type of Christ, the perfect servant of God. Joshua typifies Christ in and among His people in the power of His Spirit.

He leads His people victoriously into the promised possession. Moses' death also typifies Christ. The people could not enter the land as long as this servant of God was living. After his death the land could be possessed. So after the death of Christ the heavenly inheritance is thrown open.

The Lord mentions once more the death of His servant. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His Saints" (Ps. cxvi:12). After that the command to enter the land is given. The land promised to the seed of Abraham is God's gift. "The land which I do give unto them." They beheld that land across the river with its beautiful hills and mountains and its fertile valleys. The third verse contains a condition. "Every place that the sole of your feet shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses." They had to appropriate what God had given and as they appropriated it, they would possess and enjoy the land. If they made it their own by putting their feet upon the land, whether mountain or valley, it became theirs in reality. This required energy. As stated in our introduction, Canaan typifies the heavenly places mentioned in the Epistle to the Ephesians. We are blessed in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places (Ephes. i:3). All is the gift of the Grace of God. Unsearchable riches, far greater than that land, even in its widest dimensions, belong to us. The unsearchable riches of Christ are by the death of Christ put on our side. We must take possession in the energy of faith, as Israel had to plant their feet upon the territory and conquer it. If we are apprehended of Jesus Christ, we also must apprehend. "I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I am also apprehended of Jesus Christ" (Phil. iii:12). Israel failed in the wilderness and Israel failed in the possession of the land. And greater still is our failure in not claiming in faith our possessions in Christ.

The words the Lord addressed to Joshua are extremely precious. "I will be with thee," stands first. He was with Joshua and gave him the promise "There shall not any man

be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life." And this is true of us. He is with us, indwelling us; His Spirit is with us and His power on our side. God is for us; who can be against us? "I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." He never fails His people. Divine strength and power are on our side. In the midst of the conflict He will never forsake His people.

After these assuring and encouraging words come the exhortations to obedience. "Be strong and very courageous." Notice the courage is linked with the law (the Word of God) and obedience to it, as well as meditation in it day and night. Joshua was put in dependence on the written Word. So are we. Spiritual growth and enjoyment are impossible apart from meditation in the Word and obedience to it. The Word and obedience to it, separates us, and keeps us separated. And we need courage to obey. It requires courage in an ungodly age, a blinded world with its eye-blinding god (Satan) "to observe to do according to all that is written." It becomes more difficult as the present age draws to its close, to fight the good fight of faith, to appropriate in faith the spiritual blessings, to stand and withstand the wiles of the devil. But if we are obedient His strength will sustain us and give us victory. We constantly need the courage of faith, which looks to God and which is expressed by obedience to His Word. "God's strength is employed in helping us in the paths of God's will, not out of it. Then no matter where we go, what the difficulties are, how long the journey seems, He makes our way prosperous."

Joshua addressed the officers of the people and especially the Reubenites, Gadites and half the tribe of Manasseh. They had made their choice and had found rest on this side of Jordan. But they were not to be exempt from the approaching warfare; they are commanded to help their brethren by passing with them over Jordan. Then after their brethren had found rest, they were to return to their rest. They could not escape the conflict, though they had no reward in the land itself.

2. The Spies and Rahab's Faith.

CHAPTER II.

1. The Spies Sent Forth. Vs. 1.
2. Rahab's Faith and Works. Vs. 2–14.
3. The Escape of the Spies and Assurance Given. Vs. 15–21.
4. The Return of the Spies. Vs. 22–24.

The historical account needs not to be re-stated. Joshua, who was one of the spies sent out by Moses, now sends two spies to view the land, even Jericho. Jericho was the great stronghold of the enemy, surrounded by high walls. Jericho* means "fragrance" and is a type of the world. It is situated near Jordan, the river which typifies death and judgment. The King of Jericho is the type of Satan, the god of this age. The city was grossly immoral, so that it is not strange that the spies came to the house of an harlot. Some have tried to change her character by making her to be an inn-keeper. But it cannot be done on account of the word used in the record here and also in the New Testament. Why should even such an attempt be made? Rahab, the harlot, is a beautiful type of the power of the Gospel of Grace. "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace" (Heb. xi:31). Her faith she witnessed to by works. "Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?" (James ii:25). Rahab belonged to the doomed race, the race against which the curse had been pronounced. In the doomed city she practised her vile occupation. But she heard the report and she believed. She confessed her faith in Jehovah, the God of the heaven above and of the earth beneath. She had a reason for this

*It is interesting to note that in the Hebrew Jericho differs in its spelling in Joshua from that in Numbers. This proves certainly a different authorship.

faith, for she said, "We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt" (Verse 10). She prayed for mercy for herself and her father's house. She knew judgment would overtake Jericho, that she was a sinner and needed salvation. She believed in Jehovah and believed, that while He is a holy God, who had dealt in judgment with Egypt, that He is also merciful. She trusted in that mercy and appealed to it in her prayer. She claims assurance of salvation and that of her house and she received it in positive terms.

The scarlet-line by which the spies escaped is bound by herself in the window. It was a token to her and a sign to the coming executioners of judgment, when Jericho fell. They saw that scarlet-line; but she was not told to look upon it. How scarlet speaks of the blood needs hardly to be mentioned. It is the type of being sheltered by the blood. "When I shall see the blood, I will pass over you," was spoken to Israel, behind the blood-sprinkled door posts. The scarlet-line has the same meaning. And we must not forget that two living witnesses gave her the assurance of Salvation. Thus we have our assurance in Him, who died for our sins and who was raised on account of our justification.

By hiding the spies and lying to the King of Jericho, she shows her faith and the weakness of it. To her was also given a place of honor in the first chapter of the New Testament as one of the ancestors of Him who, according to the flesh, is the Son of David.

Dispensationally the application is equally interesting. When Israel is about to be restored to their land, a witness is sounded forth once more, the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom (Matt. xxiv:14). Before the judgments of the Lord are executed in the world, those will be saved during the end of the age who, like Rahab, hear and believe this last Kingdom message. They will do good to the Jewish messengers of this final testimony, before the coming of the Lord in power and in glory, as Rahab did good to the spies, the messengers of Joshua. They are those to whom the Lord will say, "What

ye have done to the least of these, my brethren, that have ye done unto me." Rahab was saved and remained in the land to enjoy the earthly blessings with Israel. So the Gentiles, who hear and believe the last message, who have done good to the messengers of the King, the Lord's brethren, will be saved from the wrath to come. For a more complete unfolding of this interesting theme, we refer the reader to the exposition of the Olivet discourse in the Gospel of Matthew.*

3. The Passage of Jordan.

CHAPTER III.

1. The Ark of Jehovah Going Before. Vs. 1–6.
2. Jehovah's Words to Joshua. Vs. 7–8.
3. Joshua's Words to the People. Vs. 9–13.
4. The Passage Accomplished. Vs. 14–17.

The River Jordan divided the people from the promised land. To be in the land Jordan had to be crossed. Jordan, overflowing all its banks at that time (verse 15), rolled its dark waters between them and their God-given possession. Only the power of God could bring them through those dark waters. It was a miracle which took place, when a way was opened and "the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap . . . and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt-sea, failed and were cut off" (verse 16). Unbelief has always branded this miracle as a legend. The destructive Criticism has done the same. This is the second time the Lord made a way for His people through the waters. He made first a way for them through the Red Sea, by which Israel was separated from Egypt and from their enemies. The passage

*Gospel of Matthew, An Exposition. Two volumes in one. Price $1.50.

of Jordan separated them from the wilderness and brought them into the land.*

Both, the Red Sea and Jordan, are types of the death of Christ in its blessed results for His people. The Red Sea experience typifies the fact that the believer, through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, is dead to sin and dead to the law. The passage through Jordan is the type of the fact, that the death and resurrection of Christ brings us into the heavenly places; we are seated together in Christ in heavenly places.

And how was the passage accomplished? We read now nothing more of the movement of the pillar of cloud and of fire, so prominent at the Red Sea and during the wilderness journey. The ark of the Covenant of the Lord appears in the foreground to lead the way and make a way through the overflowing waters. Taken up by the priests, carried towards the river, as soon as the priests touched the brim of it, the waters were stemmed back, till all the people had passed over on dry ground. The ark with the blood-sprinkled mercy-seat is the type of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the type of our Lord going into the deep waters of death to make a way through them for His people. The distance between the ark and the people was to be two thousand cubits. It illustrates the fact that our Lord had to do this work alone. Peter declared that he would go with Him into death, but the Lord told him, "Thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt follow Me hereafter." There was none with Him, when He made the way, but He takes all His people through death into resurrection life and glory.

In the midst of Jordan, the mighty waters standing as a heap above, the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan. It was a dry way, not a drop

*Some day the Lord will make a way for His people through the air to leave this world behind and enter into His own Presence (1 Thess. iv:17).

of the dark, muddy waters were left. It shows the truth, that the power of death (typified by the waters of Jordan) is completely gone; nothing is left of it. The work is accomplished for all His people. Not one is left behind; the weakest and the smallest pass over. What effect it must have had upon the enemies, and especially upon Jericho! Jericho was but five miles away. No doubt they watched the hosts of Israel before the passage. They felt secure on account of the mighty waters of Jordan, which seemed to bar the Israelitish invasion. How panic-stricken they must have become when they saw or heard of the great miracle and that God's people had reached the other shore! But one person was calm in Jericho. One enjoyed peace and rest and did not fear. The one from whose window there streamed the scarlet-line.

4. The Memorial Stones.

CHAPTER IV.

1. The First Memorial. Vs. 1–8.
2. The Second Memorial. Vs. 9.
3. The Return of the Priests with the Ark. Vs. 10–18.
4. The Encampment at Gilgal. Vs. 19–24.

Jehovah commanded that the great event should be remembered by a memorial. From the river-bed, where the priest's feet stood firm, twelve men, one from each tribe, were to carry twelve stones and leave them at the first lodging place in the land, that is, at Gilgal. These memorial stones were to tell subsequent generations the story of God's faithfulness and power in bringing His people through Jordan into the land. Another memorial of twelve stones was set up by Joshua in the midst of the river, where the priests stood with the ark. This whole record has been much questioned by the Critics; it has been charged that there are two different accounts. Prof. George Adam Smith states: "For instance, in the story of the crossing of

Jordan, as told in Joshua iii and iv, there are two accounts of the monument set up to commemorate the passage. One of them builds it at Gilgal on the west bank with stones taken from the river-bed by the people; the other builds it in the bed of the river with twelve stones set there by Joshua.*" Such criticism reveals the astonishing weakness of that entire school. Why should the ninth verse of the fourth chapter be looked upon as an interpolation, or as another account of one transaction? There is nothing in the text to warrant such a statement. The fact is there are two transactions. The one by the twelve men, who take the twelve stones and set them up at Gilgal. The other by Joshua, who puts twelve stones in the river-bed.

But if these Critics but knew a little more of the spiritual and typical significance of all these events and transactions, they would soon learn better. What do these two memorials mean? They tell out the story what God has done for His people. In the midst of Jordan the children of Israel could see the pile of twelve stones Joshua had put there as a memorial. As they looked upon them and the waters rushing about them, they remembered that where these stones are, there the ark halted and the waters were cut off and His people passed over.

The typical application is not hard to make. The twelve stones in the river-bed tell out the story of the death of Christ and our death with Him. We *are* dead to sin and to the law as well as crucified unto the world. We must, therefore, reckon ourselves dead unto sin.

The other memorial was erected at Gilgal. As they looked upon these stones and their children asked them, "What mean these stones?" they could point to them and say, as these stones were taken out of Jordan on the dry land, so had they been brought out of Jordan into this land of promise. This memorial is the type of the fact "that we are alive unto God in our Lord Jesus Christ." We are a new

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*The same view is held by Friedrich Bleek; no doubt Prof. G. A. Smith has it from him.

creation in Christ Jesus, the old things are passed away, behold all things are become new. It is the memorial which tells us, that we are raised up and seated in Christ in the heavenly places. These two great truths seen in this double memorial must ever be remembered by God's people, as Israel was charged to remember the passing over Jordan and the bringing into the land.

5. At Gilgal.

CHAPTER V.

1. The Terrified Enemies. V. 1.
2. Circumcision Commanded and Executed. Vs. 2–9.
3. The Passover Kept. V. 10.
4. The Old Corn of the Land. Vs. 11–12.
5. The Captain of Jehovah's Host. Vs. 13–15.

The events at Gilgal are of much interest. Jehovah had brought His people over Jordan. All His promises were kept. He had promised to deliver them out of Egypt and to bring them into the land of Canaan. All is now accomplished. The wilderness is behind them and they face the marvellous land with its riches and resources, the land flowing with milk and honey. The advance and the conquest is next in order. At the Red Sea their enemies were slain by the power of God, but now, after the power of God had brought them into the land, the real conflict begins.

Gilgal, the new ground gained and occupied by the people brought over Jordan, is the type of the resurrection-ground upon which our feet have been planted. That we are risen with Christ and seated in Him in the heavenly places must be constantly remembered, as Israel could never forget at Gilgal that they had been brought over Jordan into the land. The memorial stones served as a constant reminder.

But before they could advance a number of things took place. First we read of the fear which took hold on the Kings of the Canaanites. Their hearts melted. They were the instruments of Satan under whose control they

were; their fear denotes Satan's fear. He knew the power of Jehovah, which had brought them into the land. The enemy is defeated by the death and resurrection of our Lord. Through death He has annulled him, who has the power of death, that is the devil. Being in Christ, risen with Christ and seated in Him in the heavenly places, we can look upon the enemy as conquered. Yet it is only in the Lord and in the power of His might that we are strong. Apart from Him we become the easy prey of our enemy. What an encouragement to Israel it must have been, when they learned, as no doubt they did, that the mighty enemies, who had inspired such terror to their fathers over thirty-eight years ago, were now trembling. Israel's fear was gone, because God's power was on their side. What confidence we should have when we remember that "we are translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of His love!" Victory is on our side. All we need to do is to put on the whole armour of God, to resist the devil and he will flee from us.

Circumcision is next commanded by Jehovah. "At that time the Lord said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time." This command was carried out at once and the reproach of Egypt was rolled away. Therefore the place was called Gilgal, which means "Rolling." The circumcision was carried out on all the males, who were born in the wilderness (verses 5 and 7). The rite of such deep meaning had been neglected. No doubt they had plenty of excuses for that during the wilderness journey. No command was given to circumcise during the thirty-eight years' wandering. It was suspended; it may have been a punishment for their unbelief. But now all is changed. They are in the land. The Passover, the great memorial feast, was about to be kept. The uncircumcised could not eat the passover. The reproach of Egypt, for as uncircumcised they were the same as in bondage in Egypt, in no covenant with Jehovah, is rolled away. The visible token of belonging to Jehovah was now borne by every male in the camp.

Joshua exhibited the courage of faith in circumcising the thousands of Israelites at that time. His action has been called "most unmilitary." He put the vast majority of his fighting men into an unfit condition. What if these Canaanites should have fallen upon the settlers in their territory? May Joshua not have remembered the bastardly crime of the sons of Jacob? See Genesis xxxiv:24–26. He knew no fear; his first concern was to yield obedience to God. They tarried for several weeks at Gilgal.

What are the typical lessons of all this? Circumcision stands for the carrying out of the sentence of death to the flesh. The death of Christ is for His people a circumcision. "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" (Col. ii:11). But this fact that we are dead to sin by the circumcision, the death of Christ must be carried out practically. The sharp knife has to be applied to the flesh and the things of the flesh. The members, which are on earth, must be mortified, which means, put into the place of death, where the death of Christ has put them. If it is not done the reproach of Egypt will rest upon His people and they are unfit to enjoy their heavenly possession, and unable to advance in the things of Christ.

Gilgal, therefore, stands for the judgment of self. This is the place of our strength and power. Israel had always to return to Gilgal; when they did not they were defeated. Defeat, failure in our walk, always drives us back to self-judgment and humiliation. Victory and blessing may keep us from it; and that is our real spiritual danger.

Passover is kept next. See Numbers ix and our annotations there. What blessed memories must have come to them? They remembered that fearful night in Egypt and how Jehovah had passed over them, when He saw the blood of the lamb. Notice the difference between these two Passovers. The first they kept as guilty; they needed protection. But now they keep it as delivered and brought into the land. And we have a feast of remembrance like-

wise, the Lord's table. "Do this in remembrance of Me." It must be kept by us on resurrection-ground, realizing that we are dead with Christ and risen with Him; self-judgment is needed as well.

"The remembrance of the past is often an excellent preparation for the trials of the future, and as often it proves a remarkable support under them. It was the very nature of the Passover to look back to the past, and to recall God's first great interposition on behalf of His people. It was a precious encouragement both to faith and hope. So also is our Christian Passover. It is a connecting link between the first and second comings of our Lord. The first coming lends support to faith, the second to hope. No exercise of soul can be more profitable than to go back to that memorable day when Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us. For then the price of redemption was paid in full, and the door of salvation flung wide open. Then the Son sealed His love by giving Himself for us. What blessing, whether for this life or the life to come, was not purchased by that transaction? Life may be dark and stormy, but hope foresees a bright to-morrow. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."*

Then the Manna ceased and they ate the old corn of the land. Both foods are typical of Christ, the food God has given to His people. The Manna is the type of Christ on earth, in humiliation. The old corn is Christ in Glory. May we constantly feed on both.

Then Joshua meets before Jericho the man with the drawn sword. What a courageous man Joshua was! He meets the stranger alone. Most likely he had no sword, while the man had his sword drawn. He soon hears who the stranger is. It is the same One who appeared to Moses in the burning bush, to Abraham at Mamre, to Jacob at Pniel and to others afterward. It is Jehovah in visible form. These theophanies were surely not incarnations, yet they fore-

*Prof. W. G. Blaikie.

shadowed the incarnation of the Son of God. Here Jehovah, Who in the fulness of time became Man, appears as a Man of war, as Captain of the host of the Lord. The host are Israel. And He is the Captain of our salvation.

The Book of Joshua is the book of conflicts and conquests. The sword is freely used in carrying out the divine judgments upon the ungodly tenants of the land. Yet the *first* drawn sword, mentioned in the book, is in the hand of the Lord as He appeared unto Joshua. He fights for His people. He will yet execute the righteous judgments in the earth. It will be when He appears the second time.

6. The Fall of Jericho.

CHAPTER VI.

1. The Divine Instructions. Vs. 1–5.
2. The Instructions Followed. Vs. 6–19.
3. The Fall of Jericho. Vs. 20–21.
4. Rahab Remembered. Vs. 22–25.
5. The Curse upon Jericho. Vs. 26–27.

We do not enlarge upon the history of the chapter, which needs no comment. The fall of Jericho by the power of God, as described in this chapter, has also been ridiculed by infidels. Others have tried to explain the occurrence in a natural way. It has been said that the marching Israelites, by tramping around the city for seven days, weakened the walls, and the trumpet blasts and shouting of the people brought about their collapse. How utterly ridiculous! But what are the typical and dispensational lessons of this interesting chapter?

Jericho is the type of the world, as already stated in the annotations of the second chapter. As Jericho falls and is laid in ruins as soon as Israel is in the land, so the world is laid in ruins for the believer who apprehends his position in Christ. Our faith is the victory which overcometh the world. It was faith which obtained the victory over

Jericho. A faith which trusted in the Lord; a faith which acted in obedience to the divinely given instructions. "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days" (Heb. xi:30).* And we must walk in faith and in the power of His Spirit, as crucified unto the world and the world crucified unto us. The world must remain in ruins for the believer who walks in the Spirit, as Jericho was not to be rebuilt.

We must also think here of the walls, the hindrances, the obstacles in our lives as believers, as we pass through the world. The enemy often tries to terrify us by these, as he discouraged Israel at Kadesh by the walled cities. Alas! we often do what Joshua did not do before Jericho. We measure the walls, we study the difficulties, we are occupied with our perplexities and trials. We reckon with the walls, instead of reckoning with the Lord and His power. By faith walls still fall down.

Richer is the meaning of the fall of Jericho viewed in the light of prophecy. Jericho is the type of the world *ripe* for judgment. The high walls are types of the walls of unbelief, apostasy, wickedness and self-security. *Seven* days Israel had to march around the walls. *Seven* priests with *seven* trumpets were there. On the *seventh* day they had to march around *seven* times and blow the *seven* trumpets. Note the number "seven." It stands for Divine completion. How it all reminds us of the last book of the Bible with its *seven* seals, *seven* trumpets and *seven* vials. The trumpets, however, in Joshua are the trumpets of Jubilee. The great Jubilee, the time of blessing for this earth comes, when

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*It is a remarkable circumstance, in various aspects, that Jericho, the first and the strongest city of the land, is taken in this peculiar manner, without a single stroke of the sword. This result was intended, on the one hand, to furnish the faith of the Israelites with unquestionable evidence of the success of their future warlike movements, which now commenced, and, on the other hand, to secure them in advance, from a carnal reliance on their own strength, and from all vainglorious tendencies to ascribe their success to their own courage, their own intelligence, and their own power.

judgment is executed. As the walls of Jericho fell, so comes the day, when all the high and exalted things will be laid low (Isaiah ii:10–22). The stone will fall out of heaven (Christ in His second Coming) smiting the image, representing the world-power. Complete ruins will be the result, never to be built again; but the smiting stone becomes a mountain, filling the earth. It is the prophetic picture of the coming Kingdom.

"The details of the fall of Jericho seem *not*, however, to be facts of present experience, but prophetic of actual judgment when it comes; and this is quite as we might expect. We see by them, however, that the people of God have to maintain the testimony as to these things: compassing the city and blowing the trumpets until the city falls; although it be only in the meantime to awaken the scorn of the men of the world, as they hear the frequent alarm of that which seems never to come. But it comes, comes steadily nearer, is surely even now at the door, and how urgent should be our testimony, which, if of no effect upon the mass, yet helps to fill Rahab's house, where the true scarlet-line, as despicable in men's eyes as that of old, shields with the power of the Almighty the prisoners of hope."*

How blessedly the promise was kept to Rahab and her house! No doubt that scarlet-line was the object of ridicule in Jericho. She alone and her house escaped the dreadful judgment. The entire walls fell; but one small portion was kept standing, the portion upon which her house stood.

Jericho was built three times and three times razed to the ground. It was first destroyed under Joshua. Then Hiel, the Beth-elite rebuilt it in Ahab's reign (822–790). He experienced the curse of Joshua. Compare Joshua vi:26 with 1 Kings xvi:34. Hiel's city was destroyed by the Herodians in the 3 B. C. The next year Archelaus built Jericho again, the Jericho standing in the days of our Lord. This was destroyed by Vespassian 68 A. D.

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*F. W. Grant on "Joshua."

7. Achan's Sin and Israel's Defeat.

CHAPTER VII.

1. The Defeat of Israel. Vs. 1–5.
2. The Source of the Defeat Revealed. Vs. 6–15.
3. The Transgressor Found Out. Vs. 16–23.
4. The Judgment of Achan Vs. 24–26.

The insignificant place Ai brings defeat. Joshua sent men to view Ai. What authority was given to him to do so? There was no need to send spies once more, for the Lord had said, that the whole land was given to them. They report Ai a place without walls and recommend that only two or three thousand men be sent up. Defeat follows.

Ai means "ruins." It is mentioned for the first time in Genesis xii. Abraham built his altar between Bethel (House of God) and Ai. Ai is another type of the world. But the source of the defeat was Achan's sin. The shekels of silver and of gold, the Babylonian garment, had blinded his eyes. These things were to be "accursed," which literally means devoted; devoted to the treasury of the Lord (vi:19). Joshua had given the command that such should be the case, and also announced, that disobedience would bring trouble upon Israel. Achan's sin was responsible for the defeat of the people. He confesses, "I saw—I coveted—I took." The same old story, first enacted in the garden of Eden. The evil in the midst of the people of God, unjudged, becomes the most powerful agent against Israel and withholds God's power and blessing. It is so still. As soon as we cling to the things of the world, the enemy gets an advantage over us, and we have little power and cannot advance in the things of Christ. Ah! the Achans in our lives! Judge self; bring the evil thing into the light and victory and blessing will follow. Joshua's prayer and Jehovah's answer; Achan's sin discovered and forced confession; the judgment which falls upon him and his house; the

heap of stones raised over him—all is of interest and instruction, which our limited space forbids to follow in detail.

The valley of Achor is mentioned in Hosea ii:15 as a door of hope. The place and door of hope is in Him, who died not for his sins, but who took the sin and guilt of the nation upon Himself.*

8. The Overthrow of Ai.

CHAPTER VIII.

1. The Advance Commanded. Vs. 1–2.
2. The Strategy of Joshua. Vs. 3–13.
3. Ai's Defeat. Vs. 14–29.
4. Joshua's Obedience. Vs. 30–35.

Sin confessed, judged and put away restored communion with the Lord. If any burden remained upon the mind of Joshua, it was removed by the repeated words of comfort and cheer. "Fear not, neither be thou dismayed." The failure is no longer mentioned, but instead, comfort and assurance is given and victory promised. He deals in the same gracious way with us, whenever we have failed and

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*"The valley of Achor was not only the place of national repentance, and of a national repudiation of sin, but it was also the place of a great and tragic national expiation. Israel had sinned, and so Israel had suffered, but it was the sin of one man that had brought judgment on the camp. Now, observe, the sin of a single man was imputed to Israel, and became Israel's sin, and because of that imputation of sin, the wrath of God fell on the whole nation. But when the sin of that one man was discovered, and when it was confessed before God, then the sin imputed to the congregation reverted on to the head of the one criminal. Thus the penalty due to a national sin was actually carried out upon him whose guilt had involved the nation in judgment; and as the deadly stones were hurled upon him, that man in his death was not only reaping the reward of his disobedience, but the sin of the nation was being expiated in the death of the individual; and thus was opened 'a door of hope' through 'the valley of trouble,' whereby Israel might enter the land of promise, and find her vineyards from thence."—Aitken.

humbled ourselves before Him in self-judgment. However, their former presumption is not overlooked by Jehovah. The capture of Ai is hard work for them. They had to learn the lesson. Their pride and self-reliance was dealt with by Jehovah, who ever wants His people in the place of lowliness and weakness. Instead of 3,000 men, ten times as many had to go up and engage in the warfare.

The Lord commanded Joshua to stretch out the spear toward Ai. This corresponds to the uplifted hands of Moses in the warfare against Amalek in Exodus xvii. It was a token of the presence of divine power in securing the complete victory. We read nothing of Joshua's arm with the spear becoming weak, as it was with the uplifted hands of Moses. "For Joshua drew not his hand back wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai" (Verse 26). It was an act of faith, and divine power supported the outstretched arm.

Then, after the victory, Joshua built an altar unto the Lord God of Israel, in Mount Ebal. He is doing this in obedience to the previously given command. See Deuteronomy xxvii:2–8. What an impressive scene it must have been when "he read all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law."

"Both mounts belong to the range of Mount Ephraim; the elevated valley of Shechem lies between them. The transaction probably took place in the following manner. Six tribes occupied each mount; the priests, standing below in the valley with the ark of the covenant in their midst, turned toward Mount Gerizim as they solemnly pronounced the words of blessing, and then, looking towards Mount Ebal, repeated the words of cursing; all the people responded to each of the words, and said: 'Amen!' —Ebal, the Mount of cursing, is naked and bald; Gerizim, the mount of blessing, is green and fertile. The circumstance that the mount of cursing was assigned for the writing of the law, the erection of the altar, and the offering of sacrifice, is highly significant; the cause lies in the intimate relations existing

between the curse, on the one hand, and the Law and Sacrifice, on the other—the former brings a curse, or gives a sharp point to it, the latter abolishes it.*"

9. The Gibeonites.

CHAPTER IX.

1. The Confederacy of the Enemies. Vs. 1–2.
2. The Deception of the Gibeonites. Vs. 3–13.
3. The Failure. Vs. 14–15.
4. The Deception Discovered. Vs. 16–27.

Israel now comes face to face with the other inhabitants of the land. These enemies, which Israel encountered, are the types of our enemies, and the conflict of God's earthly people is typical of our conflict. There is, however, a difference. Israel's enemies were flesh and blood; ours are not. Israel's conflict was in the land; ours is with the wicked spirits in the heavenly places. Israel was asked to drive them out; we are not asked to do this, but to resist the devil. Israel's land rested from the conflict; we shall not rest till we are with Him, when Satan will be bruised under our feet. Read Ephesians vi:10–17.

The Canaanites are the types of the evil powers, with whom we have to wage our warfare. As the Canaanites opposed the possession and enjoyment of the land, so the aim of the wicked spirits is to keep us back, to hinder us in possessing and enjoying our spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus.

The Gibeonites were Hivites. They came with deceptions, knowing well what was their lot. The deceptions were inspired by the father of lies.

In Ephesians vi, we are especially warned against the wiles of the devil. We are to stand against the wiles of the devil. Elsewhere we read that he transforms himself into an angel of light. The Gibeonites illustrate these wiles of the devil. Not alone had they their mouldy bread

*J. H. Kurtz.

and old wineskins, as a kind of credential to back up their lies, but they talked very piously. What are these wiles of the devil? We have to turn to the so-called "religious world" to find them. The "religious world," which speaks piously of God and Christ, is at best hypocricy, phariseeism. Ritualism, Galatianism, man-made ordinances, belong to the wiles of the devil. Philosophies, traditions of men, delusive doctrines, cunningly devised fables, all these belong to the wiles of the devil (Col. ii). Such systems as Christian Science, Spiritism, Russellism,* Bahaism, Higher Criticism, Theosophy and others belong to the wiles of the devil. So does "social-reform." These world reformers, "Christian" socialists, talk piously like the Gibeonites, but the devil's wiles are underneath.

And these wiles of the devil are multiplying. Satan, knowing that his time is short, does all he can to keep God's people from enjoying their blessings and from advancing in spiritual things.

The Gibeonites, with their pious talk, were received into the congregation of Israel, just as the professing church is receiving the world into the church. The failure was with Israel. They asked not counsel of the Lord. Had Joshua gone in the presence of the Lord, He would soon have exposed the deceptions of the Gibeonites. Here is where our failure comes in likewise. Never can Satan, with his superior knowledge and his wiles, get an advantage over us, if we hold closely to the Word of God, the Sword of the Spirit, and if we ask counsel of the Lord through His Word and in prayer. The covenant made had to stand. It would have been unrighteousness, if Israel had acted differently. How many unequal yokes there are among God's people, entered into without having asked counsel of the Lord!

And there is generally no escape, but suffering in consequence. Israel had to stand much on account of the unholy

*Once known by the name of "Millennial Dawnism," but now it goes under the name of "International Bible Student Associations." No doubt this chameleon of the devil will soon take on another name.

alliance with the Gibeonites. What a man sows that he will reap. Read 2 Samuel xxi:1–6.

10. The Victorious Conquest. Chapters X–XII.

CHAPTER X.

1. Adoni-zedec and his Confederacy. Vs. 1–6.
2. The War. Vs. 7–11.
3. The Miracle. Vs. 12–15.
4. The Victory Won. Vs. 16–21.
5. The Five Kings Slain. Vs. 22–27.
6. Further Conquests. Vs. 28–43.

The name Jerusalem* is mentioned here for the first time in the Bible. It is in connection with war, and the next time we find Jerusalem on fire (Judg. i:8). This may be taken as a prophecy of the history of that city. Yet something better is in store for Jerusalem. Adoni-zedec is here the King of Jerusalem. His name means "lord of righteousness." He represents the counterfeit king in opposition to Him who is Jerusalem's true King, the true Melchi-zedec, King of righteousness and King of peace. He is a type of Anti-christ. On account of Gibeon having gone over to Israel, Adoni-zedec forms an alliance, which he heads as leader. His confederates are given by name. We give the meaning of their names in parenthesis, which will be helpful in a deeper study of these types. Hoham (the noise of a multitude), King of Hebron; Piram (the wild ass), King of Jarmuth; Japhia (causing brightness†) King of Lachish; Debir (an oracle), King of Eglon. This satanic alliance was aimed at Gibeon and at Israel as well. And Gibeon appealed to Joshua for help.

Notice that they sent to Gilgal, the first camp of Israel. Joshua and the people were at Gilgal, and from Gilgal they

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*Salem in Gen. xiv:18, is generally taken to be Jerusalem. See Psalm lxxvi:2. The ancient tablets give the name as *Ur-Salim*. But the name "Jerusalem" is found the first time in Joshua x:i.

†To dazzle the eye.

ascended. At Gilgal they saw the memorials of God's power, and encouraged by a direct message from Jehovah they went forth to war. Blessed are we, if in our spiritual warfare we go forth from Gilgal (the place of self-judgment and of power).

The great miracle of the standing still of the Sun and the Moon occurred then. The way this miracle has been held up to ridicule is known to everybody. Infidels of all generations have sneered at it. Critics have followed, as they always do, close in their footsteps. But even good men have found difficulties here and tried to explain it with their human wisdom. One explanation given is that the Hebrew word "*dum*," to stand, means rather that the sun was to cease to give its light. Upon this the statement is made, that Joshua's command was that the sun and moon should cease giving their light, and not that they should cease continuing their apparent motion. Herder in his "*Hebraische Poesie*" says:

"It is astonishing that this fine passage has been so long misunderstood. Joshua attacked the Amorites in the early morning, and the battle continued till night; that is, for a long day, which seemed to protract itself into night, to complete the victory. The sun and moon were witnesses of Joshua's great deeds, and held their course in the midst of heaven till the triumph was perfect. Who does not recognize this as poetry, even if it had not been quoted from the Book of Poems on Heroes. In the usual language of the Hebrews such expressions were neither bold nor unusual."

These are the attempts of man, by which he tries to explain the supernatural by the natural. The occurrence is a miracle. It says the sun stood still. But how is that when science tells us the sun does not move? We give the answer from Kurtz in his "Sacred History," because it is the most concise statement we have ever seen:

"A voucher from the Old Testament for the promise in Mark xi:23, 24, 'Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, &c..' is furnished by Joshua's bold word

of faith with its fulfilment. It was his prayer that the light of day might be prolonged, and the darkness of night be retarded, until he had secured the object for which he pursued the enemy: he obtained the answer which he sought by the miraculous power of his faith. No investigation respecting the natural means which produced this supernatural effect can furnish valuable results. The command of faith is pronounced in the sense which *Joshua* assigns to the words; the divine answer is given in the sense in which *God* understands them. No arguments that are either favorable or unfavorable to any particular system of astronomy are furnished by the occurrence."

The miracle must have stricken with terror the fighting nations, for they worshipped the sun and the moon.

Signs in heaven are frequently mentioned in the Word. Read and study carefully the following passages 2 Kings xx:11; Is. xxxviii:8; Amos viii:9; Isaiah xiii:10, lx:20; Ezek. xxxii:7; Joel ii:10, 31; iii:13; Matt. xxiv:29; Rev. vi:12; viii:12, ix:2, xvi:8. When the age ends with the battle of Armageddon and the Lord Jesus Christ appears the second time in great power and glory, these signs as predicted in some of these passages will be fulfilled. The sun and moon will be darkened. What terror will take hold upon the great masses of Christendom, who reject the miracle and Christ! Read Rev. vi:12–17.

What is the book of Jasher, mentioned in verse 13?

The Book of Jasher (or, *of the Upright*, that is, Israel) was a collection of sacred war-songs, and may have, possibly, formed a continuation, in a certain sense, of the "Book of the Wars of the Lord" (Num. xxi:14; 2 Sam. i:18) The collection was probably commenced in the wilderness, and, at different periods, received additions.

The fact that it is no longer in existence proves its non-inspiration.

Great are the victories described in this chapter. See verse 41 as to the territory which was covered. From Kadesh-barnea unto Gaza, all the country of Goshen unto Gibeon. And why? Because the Lord God of Israel

fought for Israel (verse 42). If God is for us, who can be against us! "And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp of Gilgal." How wonderful it is to return after our victories to Gilgal, the place of self-judgment and confessed weakness. How often our victories and blessings are more dangerous than our failures and defeats!

Further Conquests.

CHAPTER XI.

1. Jabin and His Confederacy. Vs. 1–5.
2. The Divine Encouragement. Vs. 6.
3. The Victory. Vs. 7–14.
4. The Obedience of Joshua. Vs. 15.
5. The Continued Conflict with the Kings. Vs. 16–23.

The Kings of the north formed the second confederacy, headed by Jabin, King of Hazor. Jabin means "understanding" and Hazor, "an enclosure." He with other kings, and with them "much people even as the sand that is upon the seashore in multitude, with horses and chariots very many," came to fight against Israel. These different confederacies opposing the rightful owners of the land may be taken as types of the opposition from confederate nations which Israel will have to face during the great tribulation.

Did Joshua fear in the presence of such a powerful enemy? If he feared his fear must have vanished completely when Jehovah said, "Be not afraid because of them, for to-morrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel; thou shalt hough their horses, and burn their chariots with fire." The Lord assured Joshua, and with such an assurance he rushed at once against the enemy by the waters of Merom. It does not matter how strong the enemy is, how cunningly his plans are laid, how he may come upon us with an host to terrify; if we are right with the Lord and on the Lord's side, we shall be more than conquerors. The victory is complete; their chariots are burned and the horses were disabled

by cutting the sinews of their legs. The latter no doubt had for its purpose to make it impossible for His people to trust in human resources. If they had used these horses, they might have put their confidence in them. "Some trust in chariots and some in horses; but we will remember the Lord our God" (Ps. xx:7).

At Hazor, as in other cities and places, the divine command of utter extermination of all human beings was literally carried out. "There was not any left to breathe." An awful picture indeed it is! Infidels have made the best of it by denouncing these records and blaspheming the righteous and holy God. Others again have tried to excuse the Israelites by saying that it was the customary thing 1,500 years before Christ to treat conquered nations in this way. But it was God Himself who had commanded their extermination. Joshua and Israel had no choice whatever in the matter. They acted in obedience to the divine will. God's time for the execution of His righteous judgments had come and He used Israel as His instrument. To Abraham the word was spoken concerning his seed, "In the fourth generation they will come hither again; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." The iniquity of these nations had reached such a degree, that God's wrath and holy vengeance had to fall upon them. They were given to the most awful abominations and practised unspeakable immoralities. The hour of judgment had come. The whole race was to be swept away. And who dares to question God's sovereign right to do so. Should not the Judge of all the earth do right?

Nor must we forget that the judgment of Canaan, as well as the judgment of Egypt, is prophetic. Judgment and wrath are in store for this earth. The divine sword will some day be unsheathed again. The conditions of the earth are such that God must judge. Thousands are hardening their hearts; ere long, as it was with the Canaanites (verse 20), the Lord will harden their hearts. These judgments are written in language which cannot be misunderstood.

Notice Joshua's obedience. He left nothing undone. He obeyed the Word; he followed closely the divine instructions. That led to success and blessing.

The Conquered Kings.

CHAPTER XII.

1. The Kings on the other Side of Jordan. Vs. 1–6.
2. The Kings on this Side of Jordan. Vs. 7–24.

"The land rested from war" is the concluding statement of the previous chapter. It was after Joshua had made war a long time with all those Kings (xi:18). Deut. vi:10–11 was also fulfilled. "And it shall be, when the Lord Thy God shall have brought thee into the land, which He sware unto thy Fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildest not, and houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not." The list of kings which is given in this chapter needs no comment. Thirty-one are mentioned as conquered by Joshua. The land was only 150 miles from north to south, and 50 miles from east to west. Criticism has also objected to this, as if so many kings could not exist in so small a territory. Professor Maspero, one of the foremost archaeologists, fully confirms the Bible-record. We quote from him:

"The Canaanites were the most numerous of all these groups, and had they been able to amalgamate under a single king, or even to organize a lasting confederacy, it would have been impossible for the Egyptian armies to have broken through the barrier thus raised between them and the rest of Asia; but, unfortunately, so far from showing the slightest tendency towards unity or concentration, the Canaanites were more hopelessly divided than any of the surrounding nations. Their mountains contained nearly as many states as there were valleys, while in the plains

each town represented a separate government, and was built on a spot carefully selected for purposes of defence. The land, indeed, was chequered by these petty states, *and so closely were they crowded together, that a horseman travelling at leisure could easily pass through two or three of them in a day's journey.*" Of the richer country towards the North he writes: "Towns grew and multiplied upon this rich and loomy soil."

II. The Division of the Land.

Chapters xiii–xxi.

The divine record concerning the division of the land, as it is before us in these chapters, is often looked upon merely as history barren of any spiritual meaning. Many expositors pass over the greater part of it or give only geographical information. However, a deeper meaning must be sought here; there are many and blessed lessons in spiritual and dispensational truths hidden in these chapters. Why should the Holy Spirit have recorded all these things if they have no meaning whatever? It is written, "*All* Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. iii:16). This surely applies to all Scripture, including the chapters which contain nothing but names. Again it is written, "Now all these things happened unto them (Israel) as types, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come" (1 Cor. ix:11). "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Rom. xv:4). We dare not deny these chapters in Joshua a spiritual application in the light of these plain words of the Spirit in the New Testament.

In the study of the previous books we have discovered (especially in Genesis) the fact that the meaning of the Hebrew names are of deep significance and often helpful in the types as well as the spiritual and dispensational lessons. Here is a wide field, which has been but little covered. Hundreds of names are found in this second part of Joshua. They all have a meaning and through these names we can learn the lessons the Spirit of God has written there for our learning. Yet caution is needed. While some ignore

this study entirely, others swing into the opposite direction and are fanciful in their application. This must be avoided.

We are sorry that the scope of our work does not permit a more detailed exposition and research. If we were to give way to the desire to do this we would have to write a volume. But we hope, with His gracious help, to give such hints which will help in a more extended private study.*

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*F. W. Grant in the Numerical Bible gives excellent help, both in the meaning of the names and in application. We know of no other attempt in this direction and acknowledge our own indebtedness to him. This, of course, does not mean that we endorse all the translations or applications he gives.

1. Instruction Given; The Two and One-half Tribes.

CHAPTER XIII.

1. Jehovah speaks to Joshua. Vs. 1–7.
2. Inheritance of the Two and One-half Tribes. Vs. 8–33.

About seven years had gone by since the passage over Jordan and Joshua, being old and advanced in years, is addressed by the Lord. He takes care of His servants in their old age and provides for their comfort. Much land was yet to be possessed. Israel never responded to the fulness of God's gift to them. How great their failure, as well as our failure as His spiritual people, to possess our possessions, which God's grace has put on our side!

The unpossessed land is described in verses 2–7. It was never possessed in full by Israel, nor did they ever have the land, as promised to them from the Red Sea to the River Euphrates. God's gifts and calling being without repentance (Rom. xi:29) the time must yet come when they receive that land in the dimensions as promised in Exodus xxiii:31. When their restoration comes with the coming of their once rejected King, our Lord, this promised land will be possessed by the nation.

These undisposed enemies may well be taken as the types of our spiritual enemies. The Philistines, who were not Canaanites, stand in the foreground. Their origin may be traced in Genesis. They were sons of Ham and sprang from Egypt. The name "Palestine" is derived from "Philistine." They typify the power of corruption to the people of God. The Philistines to-day, which keep God's people back from the enjoyment of their inheritance, are the corrupt forms of Christianity, Rome and her daughters. Note the five princes of the Philistines and their residence. Gaza (strong); Ashdod (I will spoil); Ashkelon (the fire of infamy); Gath (wine-press, a type of wrath); Ekron (uprooting). These names describe the character of these powerful enemies of Israel. We leave it with the reader to apply them to that powerful ecclesiastical world-system,

Rome. The Avvites belonged to the gigantic races, which dwelt in the land. The name means "perverters." Satan with his powerful agencies perverts the truth and keeps God's people in bondage.

And the Lord promises to drive them out (verse 6). With His own power He was ready to dispossess these wicked usurpers, if Israel was but willing to advance in faith and act upon His promise. Here is where they failed. Oh! that we might see that God is on our side in the conflict and in the possession of our inheritance.

The inheritance of the two tribes and a half, Reuben, Gad and half Manasseh is then restated and confirmed.

2. Caleb's Request and Inheritance.

CHAPTER XIV.

1. The Inheritance by Lot. Vs. 1-5.
2. Caleb's Request. Vs. 6-15.

Judah's portion comes first, and as they draw near to Joshua to receive their inheritance by lot (See Prov. xvi:33 and Acts i:26) at Gilgal (note the recurrence of this place and its significance), Caleb, the son of Jephuneh, steps to the front. It was not forwardness or love of the pre-eminence which led him to do this, but the burning zeal in that old, yet youthful soul. He comes to claim the inheritance, which forty-five years ago Moses had promised unto him. Caleb was eighty-five years old. "As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me; as my strength was then even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out and to come in." One can almost see him standing before Eleazar, Joshua and the heads of the tribes. What a beautiful testimony he gives to the faithfulness of the Lord! He could say, "I wholly followed the Lord my God." He stands for the man who trusts His God, who reckons not with earthly circumstances and conditions, but with the Lord and His promised power. They that honor me, I will honor. Forty years old was Caleb when he was put among the spies,

and when, with Joshua, he honored God and His Word. The reward of faith became evident in his long life. Mental vigor and physical strength remained unimpaired. And now he claims his inheritance. Patiently he had waited for forty-five years. The hour has come. He claims the mountain with its Anakim, the giants, the fenced cities, the great cities. That beautiful mountain with its strenuous task is the claimed inheritance. Old age is often characterized by "the pride of life." The lust of the flesh is peculiar to youth; the lust of the eyes, the desire of increase in earthly things to enjoy them, comes with middle life, and in old age the temptation is "the pride of life." But not so with the man of faith. Listen to his humble language. He does not pride himself of his faith and trust in God; he knows nothing of self-confidence. "If so be the Lord will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord said."

In our day of departure from God and unbelief, may we be like Caleb, "wholly following the Lord." We, too, wait in faith and in patience for the promised inheritance, which some day will be ours, when He comes to reward His Saints. Then as Israel's land had rest from war (verse 15) we shall enter into our rest from strife and conflict.

3. The Portion of Judah.

CHAPTER XV.

1. The South-border of Judah's Portion. Vs. 1–4.
2. The Eastern and Northern Border. Vs. 5–11.
3. The Western Border. Vs. 12.
4. Caleb's Conquest. Vs. 13–19.
5. Inheritance according to Families. Vs. 20–63.

This is a chapter which contains many names; nearly one hundred and fifty are recorded. With the help of a good Concordance, or dictionary of Hebrew names, the English meaning may be ascertained. However, many of these names may be derived from different roots and have therefore

a different meaning, while the meaning of others is rather obscure. For the reason already stated we cannot follow the possible meaning and application of these names. The lesson, however, is that the Lord distributed the inheritance to His people and placed them as it pleased Him. He knew their faithfulness and their ability, and accordingly they received their portion. And we, too, as members of His body, receive our portion and inheritance from Himself, "dividing to every man severally as He will" (1 Cor. xii:11).

Caleb's conquest is of additional interest. In the previous chapter we learned of his faith and how he honored the Lord. He acknowledged that the Lord had kept him alive; by His mercy he had been spared (xiv:10). He claimed His portion, and in humility of faith he expected success and victory. He gets Hebron, which means "communion." The application in spiritual lines is interesting. Faith longs for Hebron, for communion. But the giants, the Anakim, are there, to keep away from real communion with God. They must be dispossessed. Caleb drove out the three sons of Anak. Their names are Sheshai, which means "my fine linen,"* reminding us of our own righteousness; Ahiman, the meaning of this word is "who is my brother?" which may be applied to pride of descent; Talmai, the third son of Anak, means "abounding in furrows," the pride of achievement. Pride in different forms is the hindrance to real communion with God. Pride has to be dethroned in the heart and in the life of His people. Only as we follow the Lord wholly, as Caleb did, shall we conquer and enjoy our Hebron in the Lord Jesus Christ. And he also had Debir (Oracle—the voice speaking); Kirjath-sepher means "city of the book." Thus Hebron, communion, is closely linked with the written Word and the voice which speaks there. And in Achsah, Caleb's daughter, we have another side of faith represented. When Caleb said unto her, "What wouldest thou?" she answered, "Give me a blessing; for

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*_Shesh_ is the Hebrew word used for the fine linen in the tabernacle. In this way we get "Sheshai," _my_ fine linen.

thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And he gave her the upper springs and the nether springs." It is faith which asks much and receives much.

4. The Portion of Ephraim.

CHAPTER XVI.

1. The Lot for the Children of Joseph. Vs. 1–4.
2. Ephraim's Portion. Vs. 5–9.
3. Ephraim's Failure. V. 10.

A wonderful lot was that of Joseph, beginning at Jordan, the river of death, up to Bethel, which means "the house of God." Then the portion of Ephraim comes first. Ephraim with the blessed inheritance to be "doubly fruitful" (the meaning of Ephraim) fails. "They drove not out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer." Josephus, the Jewish historian, remarks on this: "They grew effeminate as to fighting any more against their enemies, but applied themselves to the cultivation of the land, which producing them great plenty and riches, they indulged in luxury and pleasure." No doubt this tradition is correct. How this has been repeated in Christendom! What Ephraim became, joined to idols, we read in the Prophet Hosea.

5. The Portion of Manasseh.

CHAPTER XVII.

1. Their Names. Vs. 1–6.
2. Their Border. Vs. 7–13.
3. The Complaint and the Answer. Vs. 14–18.

Half of the tribe of Manasseh had their inheritance on the other side of Jordan, having joined themselves to Reuben and Gad. The rest of Manasseh are now named according to their families. These are: Abiezer, Helek, Asriel, Shechem, Hepher and Shemida. The son of Hepher, Zelophehad had no sons (see Num. xxvii:1–11); the names

of the five daughters are given here again. They claim now the inheritance which the Lord had given to them. They, too, exhibit the courage of faith. May we also claim in faith that inheritance which belongs to us through the Grace of God.

The complaint of the children of Joseph shows dissatisfaction with their lot; it was selfishness. Joshua takes them by their word. His answer reminds us of the divine command given in Chapter i:3. "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses." Yonder were the stately forests, the wooded hills and mountains, inhabited still by the Perizzites and the giants. All they needed to do was to go there and drive them out and they would possess a larger portion. But this answer but brings out their unbelief and failure. They plead weakness; it was nothing less than unbelief, for they looked to the iron chariots the Canaanites possessed, instead of looking to the Lord and trusting His power. They refused to meet the enemy and have their borders enlarged under these conditions. What a contrast with bold and humble Caleb! And yet Joshua encourages them. He urges them to go forward and possess the forest and cut it down. It was his challenge to their faith. Faith does not reckon with chariots, with difficulties.

6. The Portion of the Rest of the Tribes. Chapters XVIII-XIX.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1. The Tabernacle at Shiloh. Vs. 1.
2. The Remaining Seven Tribes. Vs. 2-10.
3. The Lot of Benjamin. Vs. 11-28.

The tabernacle of the congregation is now set up at Shiloh. Shiloh means "peace"—"security." The land was then subdued before them. Shiloh is now the center. From there the operations proceed. Seven times after this

Shiloh is mentioned in the book of Joshua: Chapter xviii: 8, 9, 10; xix:51; xxi:2; xxii:9, 12. Read these carefully and see what happened in connection with Shiloh, the place of rest. The tabernacle remained at Shiloh till the Philistines came and took the ark, as recorded in 1 Sam iv:11. Then it was at Nob in the days of Saul, then at Jerusalem, at Gibeon in the beginning of Solomon's reign (2 Chron i:3). It never got back to this first resting-place.

At that time seven tribes still remained without an inheritance. They seemed to be content without any inheritance whatever. Most likely they had also become tired of war. Theirs had been a strenuous experience. It was difficult work to go forth and conquer, to occupy new territory and meet the enemies. They must likewise have come into possession of many things for their comfort, which were unknown to them in the wilderness; and with the natural and plentiful resources of the land they became self-indulgent and were at ease. Joshua's earnest appeal suggests such a state of the people. "How long are ye slack to go to possess the land, which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you?" And their negligence in not possessing the land avenged itself, for the unpossessed land with its enemies became "scourges in their sides and thorns in their eyes." What ingratitude it was, after God's wonderful power had brought them in, that they should neglect to avail themselves of so great a gift! Such is man, always a failure in himself. It needs hardly to be said, that all this finds an application with ourselves, whom the Lord has brought into a better land and richer inheritance. How slack we are to go to possess the land! How many neglect so great salvation! Joshua then gave instructions and the men selected walked through the land and made a survey of it.

The inheritance of Benjamin is described in the remaining portion of this chapter. Their lot fell into a steep, mountainous country; many of the cities they received were in high places, indicated by such names as Gibeon (hilly); Gibeath (a hill); Gaba (elevation); Ramah (the height);

Mizpeh (watch-tower), etc. May we ascend the heights of glory we have in Christ, and walk in our high-places, with feet as swift as the hinds' feet (Habak. iii:00). And we too have our "Mizpeh," the place of watching and waiting for Him, who will lead us into our wonderful inheritance in the day of His coming Glory.

"Benjamin was counted the least of the tribes (1 Sam. ix:31), and when, with other tribes, it was represented by its chief magistrate, it was rather disparagingly distinguished as 'little Benjamin with their ruler' (Psalm lxviii:27). Yet it was strong enough, on one occasion, to set at defiance for a time the combined forces of the other tribes (Judg. xx:12, etc.). It was distinguished for the singular skill of its slingers; seven hundred, who were left-handed, 'could every one sling stones at an hair-breadth and not miss' (Judg. xx:16). The character of its territory, abounding in rocky mountains, and probably in game, for the capture of which the sling was adapted, might, in some degree, account for this peculiarity.

"Many famous battles were fought on the soil of Benjamin. The battle of Ai; that of Gibeon, followed by the pursuit through Bethhoron, both under Joshua; Jonathan's battle with the Philistines at Michmash (1 Sam. xiv); and the duel at Gibeon between twelve men of Saul and twelve of David (2 Sam. ii:15, 16); were all fought within the territory of Benjamin. And when Sennacherib approached Jerusalem from the north, the places which were thrown into panic as he came near were in this tribe. 'He is come to Aiath, he is passed through Migron; at Michmash he layeth up his baggage: they are gone over the pass; they have taken up their lodging at Geba; Ramah trembleth; Gibeah of Saul is fled. Cry aloud with thy voice, O daughter of Gallim! hearken, O Laishah! O thou poor Anathoth! Madmenah is a fugitive; the inhabitants of Gebim gather themselves to flee. This very day shall he halt at Nob; he shaketh his hand at the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem' (Isa. x:28-32, R. V.). In later times Judas Maccabeus gained a victory over the Syrian forces at

Bethhoron; and, again, Cestius and his Roman troops were defeated by the Jews."*

The tribe counted the least, "little Benjamin," came into possession of the richest inheritance, which is abundantly witnessed to by the names of the different cities, if we diligently search out their meaning. God delights to take up what is little and make it great.†

CHAPTER XIX.

1. The Inheritance of Simeon. Vs. 1–9.
2. The Inheritance of Zebulun. Vs. 10–16.
3. The Inheritance of Issachar. Vs. 17–23.
4. The Inheritance of Asher. Vs. 24–31.
5. The Inheritance of Naphtali. Vs. 32–39
6. The Inheritance of Dan. Vs. 40–48.
7. The Inheritance of Joshua. Vs. 49–51.

The many names of cities and villages, the inheritance of the remaining six tribes, we must leave untouched. Blessed and deep spiritual lessons are written in all these names. Simeon's inheritance is closely connected with that of Judah. "Their inheritance was in the midst of the inheritance of the children of Judah." Simeon means "Hearing" and Judah means "Praise." Thus the two are linked together. If our hearts are open to hear and our faith appropriates we praise and worship and enjoy our God-given inheritance in the Lord Jesus Christ. And the different cities have a blessed meaning. Diligent and prayerful searching will discover the hidden treasures which faith prizes more than gold, and which are "sweeter than honey." Let us glance briefly at Asher to give a little illustration of this. Asher means "happy," commonly translated by "Blessed" (Psalm i:1; xxxii:1; cxix:1). The Lord's people must be a happy people. Moses had pronounced them so

*Expositor's Bible.

†Saul of Tarsus, our great Apostle Paul (Paul means "Little"), was of the tribe of Benjamin. He possessed and enjoyed his inheritance in the Heavenlies.

(Deut. xxxiii:29). A few of the cities and boundaries of Asher and their meaning will show in what the happiness of God's people consists. Helkath means "portion;" the Lord Himself is the portion of His people. He is our joy and happiness. Hali means "an ornament worked out with pain." We possess that which Christ has worked out for us in His death. Ahamelech means "God is King." This is a sweet morsel to faith. Amad, "an eternal people," speaks of our security, that we belong to God and nothing can separate us from Him. Misheal, "feeling after God," tells of the longing of the new nature, which finds happiness in God. Hammon, "sunny;" Kanah, "He has purchased"; Zidon, "taking the prey"; Hosah, "trust"; Ummah, "union"; Aphek, "strength"—these and others are easily seen as giving spiritual lessons on the happiness of the people of God who enjoy in faith the inheritance.

After all had received their portions Joshua received his. It was Timnath-serah, which means "an abundant portion." The portion of Joshua is the blessed type of the inheritance, which the Lord Jesus Christ has received. We must not overlook the fact that the children of Israel gave Joshua the inheritance. Christ is our inheritance and we are His inheritance. He has an inheritance in the Saints (Ephes. i:18). May we give Him that inheritance.

7. The Cities of Refuge.

CHAPTER XX.

1. The Ordinance Repeated. Vs. 1–6.
2. The Cities Named. Vs. 7–9.

The reader will find the meaning of the ordinance of the cities of Refuge in Numbers and Deuteronomy, so that we do not need to repeat it here. But only three cities are mentioned in the Pentateuch. Here the three cities in the land are added. Kedesh was in Naphtali. Kedesh means "Sanctuary," and Naphtali means "Wrestler—Struggler."

Christ is the refuge for the struggling sinner. Shechem means "shoulder," and is the type of service. He who is the perfect servant, who ministered and gave His life, is the place of refuge. Kirjath-arba, which is Hebron, is the third, and Hebron means "communion." This we find in Him. Bezer (defense), Ramoth (heights) and Golan (rejoicing) were the other three beyond Jordan, named already in the Pentateuch.

8. The Portion of the Levites.

CHAPTER XXI.

1. The Levites, the Children of Aaron, and their Portions. Vs. 1–8.
2. Kohath. Vs. 9–26.
3. Gershon. Vs. 27–33.
4. Merari. Vs. 34–40.
5. The Lord's Faithfulness. Vs. 41–45.

In chapters xiii:14, 33 and xiv:3, 4 the statement is made that Moses gave no inheritance to the Levites. The Lord was their inheritance. After the tribes had received their allotments the heads of the fathers of the Levites came to Joshua and Eleazar with a petition. They based their petition upon the Word of God spoken to Moses. 'Command the children of Israel, that they give unto the Levites of the inheritance of their possession cities to dwell in; and ye shall give also unto the Levites suburbs for the cities round about them" (Num. xxxv:2). The people were obedient and gave them cities out of their several inheritances. But the cities were also assigned by lot, so that the Lord assigned them their habitations. How it must have pleased Him to see His Word remembered, obeyed and acted upon! They were scattered throughout the entire domain of Israel. The Kohathites and the children of Aaron had thirteen cities in the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Simeon, and two more in Ephraim, Dan and Manasseh. The Gershonites were placed in cities in eastern Manasseh, Issachar, Asher and Naphtali. The Merarites were in Zebulun and among Gad and Reuben.

The divine purpose in scattering them over the land was, no doubt, that they might exercise a beneficent influence in divine things to exhort the tribes to worship Jehovah, to remind them of His goodness and to restrain them from idolatry. At the close of this chapter we read of the faithfulness of the Lord. He gave them the land; He gave them rest; He gave them victory. "There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken." All God's promises will be in due time accomplished.

III. The Final Words of Joshua. The Epilogue.

Chapters xxii-xxiv

1. The Two and One-half Tribes. The Altar Ed.

CHAPTER XXII.

1. Joshua's Address. Vs. 1–6.
2. The Tribes Dismissed and their Return. Vs. 7–9.
3. The Great Altar Erected. V. 10.
4. War Proposed. Vs. 11–12.
5. The Mission of Phinehas and the Explanation. Vs 13–29.
6. The Explanation Accepted. Vs. 30–31.
7. The Altar Ed. Vs. 32–34.

A beautiful scene is before us. Joshua, the aged servant of God, called the Reubenites, the Gadites and half of Manasseh. Their selfish choice in selecting their portion on this side of Jordan is found in Numbers. They had, however, to pass over Jordan with the other tribes and help them in the conflict (Chapter i:12–18). The promise they had made was conscientiously kept and the time for their return to their habitations had come. Joshua commends them for their faithfulness, and exhorts them to love the Lord, to walk in all His ways, to keep His commandments, to cleave unto Him and to serve Him. May we also heed these words. Only as we walk in all His ways and are obedient to His Word can we enjoy the fellowship and the spiritual blessings which belong to us. They returned with great riches, with silver, gold, brass, iron and raiment.

They erected, after their homegoing, a great altar.* It was of immense size, so that it might be seen far and wide as a silent witness. When the rest of Israel heard of this altar, and thinking that it meant a separate worship,

*Hebrew: An altar great to the sight.

instituted by these two and a half tribes, they were ready to go to war. They exhibited great zeal for the Lord and were ready to carry out His Word. See Exodus xx:24; Lev. xvii: 8–9; Deut. xii:5–13; xiii:7–13. But while they were zealous, they also exhibited wisdom and sent Phinehas with ten princes to investigate the supposed apostasy. The explanation follows and is accepted. The altar was then called Ed, which means "witness." It was to bear witness between them, that the Lord is God, and that the tribes, though separated by Jordan, are one people. But where is to-day the witness in Christendom that there is one body? That witness seems to have been lost.

2. Joshua's Two Addresses.

Chapters xxiii–xxiv:28.

The First Address.

CHAPTER XXIII.

1. The People Gathered. Vs. 1–2.
2. God's Faithfulness Remembered. Vs. 3–5.
3. Exhortations to Obedience. Vs. 6–11.
4. Warning. Vs. 12–13.
5. Conclusion of First Address. Vs. 14–16.

It was about eight years after the Lord had given rest unto Israel, that the aged Joshua called for all Israel and their elders to assemble in his presence. He was very old and the time of his departure at hand. The purpose of his first address is to remind the people and their elders of the Lord's faithfulness in keeping all His promises, and to exhort them to be faithful to Him and to warn them of the results of apostasy. He exhorts them with the same message, which the Lord had given to him in the beginning of the book. Compare verse 6 with chapter i:7. He had been obedient to this command and the Lord had done all for him He had promised. Joshua was a man of faith and courage, an excellent character.

"He is characterized by conscientious fidelity to the Law, and unclouded theocratical sentiments. He is deliberate and prudent when he acts himself, for he conducts the wars of the Lord; but he becomes prompt, bold and decided, when the Lord sends him. His courage is humility, his strength is faith, his wisdom is obedience and the fear of the Lord. He has a gentle spirit, but does not betray weakness; the evidence of the latter is furnished by his strict judgment in the case of Achan, and the scrupulous exactness with which he executes the Lord's sentence respecting the Canaanites. Such a union of gentleness and rigor, of simplicity and prudence, of humility and grandeur of sentiment, presents evangelical features. This peculiarity of his character, combined with the peculiarity of that age of the kingdom of God in which he lived, and also of the position which he occupied, adapts both himself and the work which he performed to be highly significant types of the future. He conducts the people into the land of promise and of rest; but there remains a better rest into which his archetype, who bears the same name, conducts the people of God (Heb. iv:8, 9); he carries on the wars, and executes the judgments of the Lord, in which are shadowed the victories and judgments of Christ.

"The sentiments which govern Joshua, pervade the people in general in his day. The whole history of the chosen people presents no other period in which they were generally animated by such zeal in the cause of the theocracy, by such conscientious fidelity to the Law, by such vigorous faith and sincere fear of God as that generation manifested. It was the period of first love, and, in this aspect, may be compared with the first centuries of the Christian Church."*

And we need, as His people, the courage of faith to stand for the Lord and for His Word in the days of departure from God. And Joshua's warning was sadly fulfilled in the subsequent history of Israel.

*Kurtz in "Sacred History."

The Second Address.

CHAPTER XXIV:1–28.

1. The Gathering at Shechem. V. 1.
2. Historic Retrospect and Exhortations. Vs. 2–15.
3. The Answer Given by Israel. Vs. 16–18.
4. Joshua's Answer. Vs. 19–20.
5. The Promise Made. V. 21.
6. Joshua's Appeal and the Repeated Promise. Vs. 22–24.
7. The Covenant made and Joshua's final Word. Vs. 25–28.

In Joshua's second and last address to the people at Shechem we have first a historic retrospect. It must not be overlooked, that the words of Joshua are not his own, but the words given to him by the Lord. "Thus saith the Lord, God of Israel," is the manner in which he begins. The retrospect is a marvel in terse statements and rehearsal of the entire history of Israel, beginning with the call of Abraham. Its object is to remind the assembled congregation once more of the mercies and faithfulness of Jehovah. How soon they may be forgotten! Yet upon remembering what we are by nature and what the Lord in His infinite grace has done for us, depends a true walk with God. The Spirit of God, through Joshua, shows that Abraham was called away from idolatry and traces all Jehovah did for him and his seed. Notice the different acts of the Lord. I took your father Abraham—I led him—I multiplied his seed—gave him Isaac—I gave—I sent Moses—I plagued Egypt—I brought you out—I brought you into the land. All the promises made in Exodus and Deuteronomy concerning the possession and conquest of the land had been fulfilled. Read Exodus xxiii:28 and Deut. vii:20 and compare with verse 12. He gave them a land for which they did not labor.

The covenant is then renewed. Beautiful are Joshua's words, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." He had served Him all his life and on the eve of his departure, he renews his vow. With such an enthusiastic, consecrated and successful leader, the people could only answer in

the affirmative. They renewed their previous promise to serve the Lord. The answer they gave is an echo of Joshua's words. They repeat what Jehovah had so graciously done unto them. Joshua's answer to the enthusiastic reply of the people was "Ye cannot serve the Lord." He well knew by the light of the Spirit of God that this people, so stiffnecked in the past, would soon depart from this resolution and follow other gods. Besides this, Joshua knew the final words of Moses, the great prophecies concerning the apostasy of the nation, their deep fall into idolatries and their coming dispersion among the Gentiles. With the Word of God before him, he could not believe that the future of the people, whom Jehovah had brought out and brought in, would be a future of obedience and blessing. He is not deceived by the enthusiasm which had taken hold of the assembled congregation. We also have in the New Testament the predictions and the warnings concerning the course of the professing church on earth during the present age. We do well to heed these. If not we shall be deceived in expecting that which is nowhere promised for this age.

"The predictions of the Church's course have so little ambiguity that it is marvelous that the smooth preaching of peace, and the comforting assurance of progressive blessing, could ever gain credence with those who boast in an 'open Bible.' But the Bible can be but little 'open' as long as man's pride and self-seeking hang their imaginative veil before it; and the Church, believing herself heir to Israel's promises, has largely refused to accept the lessons of Israel's career, which she has so closely followed. Thank God, we are near the end of the strange history of almost two millennia; and for us the end is the coming of the Lord."*

The covenant was thus renewed and a great stone set up as a witness. How long did it last? Our next book gives the answer: "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served the Baalim" (Judges ii:11).

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*F. W. Grant.

"And they forsook the Lord and served Baal and Ashtaroth" (verse 13).

3. The Epilogue.

CHAPTER XXIV:29–33.

1. Joshua's Death and Burial. Vs. 29–31.
2. The Bones of Joseph Buried. V. 32.
3. Eleazar's Death. V. 33.

Moses, the instrument through whom the law was given, was buried by the Lord, no doubt a hint that some day the Lord would put away the law, with its curse, as we learn in the New Testament. Joshua was buried by the people in his own inheritance; he died ten years younger than Moses, that is 110 years old. Joseph had reached the same age, having died some 200 years before. Gen. l:25; Exod. xiii:19 and Hebrews xi:22 must be consulted to understand the burial of his bones recorded here. They had carried those bones all through the wilderness and never attempted to bury them till they were settled in the land. The book closes with the account of Eleazar's death.

Appendix.

THE DISPENSATIONAL ASPECT OF THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.

The Book of Joshua foreshadows the great coming events in which Israel, Israel's land and the nations are concerned. Everything in Israel's history is prophetic. The events connected with the lives of the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as well as the story of Joseph, have a prophetic dispensational meaning. Israel in the furnace of Egypt foreshadows Babylon, and also the great dispersion in which they are now. Their persecutors then were Gentiles, who hated them and would not let them go; Gentiles are still troubling them and will persecute them during the time of the end. Their remarkable experiences and preservation in Egypt are the types of their miraculous keeping, and no less miraculous increase among all the nations of the world, among whom they have been scattered. The plagues which fell upon Egypt are typical of the judgments of God, which will fall upon the world at the close of the present age. Their Exodus from Egypt teaches similar lessons. The passage through the Red Sea, their slain enemies and the song of Praise, as given in Exodus XV, have likewise a dispensational aspect. So has the visible presence of Jehovah. As He was there with His people, so will He be with them again.

As we have seen in the study of Numbers, the parables of Balaam are great prophecies, touching the future of Israel. When the dying people were looking upon the brazen serpent, and the healing which resulted, may also be taken as a type of their future looking upon Him, whom they have pierced. There is therefore also a dispensational foreshadowing in the book of Joshua. We shall mention seven things.

1. The Possession of the Land.

That goodly land in its great dimensions is still Israel's land, the land of promise. They have yet to possess it from the Euphrates to the River Nile. To say that Israel will never receive the land and possess it in the future as a redeemed people, would mean the same as accusing God of breaking His promises and oath-bound covenants.

As surely as we are in Christ the Heirs of God and Joint-heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ, so surely will Israel inherit and possess the land. As there was a definite time for Israel to cross Jordan and possess the land, so is there a definite time when God will bring them in again. It will be when the measure of wickedness of the nations, who are the present possessors of the land, is filled up, as the wickedness of the Canaanites was filled up in Joshua's days. When that time comes God will once more remember the covenant, and He will give the land back to His people and bring them in, as He brought them in through Joshua.

The land is God's gift. We have often talked with Jews and Zionists. Some years ago a Zionistic leader mentioned in our presence their plans of getting the land back gradually, and eventually buy the whole land. We asked him: "What would you think, if your horse had been stolen by a thief, and you knew the thief, went to him and offered him a hundred dollars to buy your horse back? Would it not be the most nonsensical as well as unjust dealing?" You Zionists are trying to buy back the land from the power which has no right to have the land. That power holds stolen property. And, besides, this land, according to the law, is not to be bought nor to be sold. To-day the power which holds Palestine Turkey is crumbling to pieces. It is only the question of time when the fate of Palestine has to be decided.

II. Joshua Their Leader.

As we have mentioned before in the annotations, Joshua means "Jehovah is Saviour." Moses, the first one, could

not bring them in, but Joshua, the second divinely appointed leader, brought them in. Moses is the type of Christ's first Coming, and Joshua the type of the second coming of Christ. It is at the second Coming of our Lord that Israel will receive the land. He will restore to them the God-given inheritance.

Under Joshua the people were no longer stiff-necked, but obedient and submissive, willing followers of Him who led them forth. This will be the case when the Lord Jesus Christ returns. Then they will be His willing people (Psalm cx:3). Joshua was magnified before the eyes of all Israel, even as Christ will be magnified when He comes again. At the close of the fourth chapter of Joshua we read that all the people may know and fear the Lord. This surely will be the result of the second Coming of our Lord.

III. The Spies and Rahab.

God's abounding Grace is illustrated in the salvation of Rahab and her house. In the New Testament we find her with three other Gentile women in the genealogy of our Lord in Matthew's Gospel. We read of her in Hebrews xi and in the Epistle of James. The meaning of these passages has already been pointed out. The scarlet line, and her security and salvation from judgment, we have also seen in the annotations. But the story has still another application.

The two spies entered the land in advance of the whole nation. They were faithful and courageous men, and took their lives into their own hands. They may well be taken as a type of the faithful remnant, which will be a kind of an advance guard entering into the land, before the rest of Israel is taking possession. The King of Jericho, who seeks their lives, is the type of that wicked One, the counterfeit King and Messiah. Their flight to the mountains reminds us of the word of warning given by our Lord in His Olivet discourse, "Let them that be in Judea flee unto the mountains." Rahab, who believed and hid the spies and was saved on account of it, foreshadows those of the

nations, who believe the last message concerning the coming of the King and the judgment in store for this earth. They will do good to the Jewish remnant, as Rahab did hide the spies. When the Lord comes and takes the seat upon the throne of His Glory, He will say to them: "What ye have done to the least of these, my brethren, ye have done unto Me." Rahab remained in the land and enjoyed blessings with Israel. So the nations, who believe during the great tribulation, will remain on the earth, and not be swept away by the divine judgments.

IV. The Events at Gilgal have a Prophetic Significance.

The circumcision of Israel, as carried out by Joshua, is the type of the spiritual circumcision which the Lord will effect for the whole nation. Of this the Word of prophecy speaks: "And the Lord Thy God will circumcise thine heart and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord Thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live" (Deut. xxx). "Behold I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in my anger, and in my fury and great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them" (Jeremiah xxxii:37–39). "Then I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and all your idols will I cleanse you. And a new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you. And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh" (Ezek. xxxvi:25–28). Then the reproach, which has rested upon them for so long, will be rolled away. They will become the head of all the nations of the world.

V. The Fall of Jericho and the Overthrow of Israel's Enemies.

As stated in the annotations, Jericho is the type of the world ripe for judgment. The number seven, in its frequency in the fall of Jericho, the reader will find more fully described in the annotations of chapter vi. The walls of Jericho fell without the single sword being lifted up. The breath of Jehovah laid them flat. So shall the day come when the power of God will throw down the high and lofty things.

The warfare which Israel carried on is likewise prophetic. Israel was used to execute God's vengeance upon the wicked nations of Canaan. It will be repeated in the future. "Thou art my battle-ax and weapons of war; for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms" (Jer. xxi:20). Read also Micah v;8–9: Ez. xxxix:10; Zech. ii:6; Zech. xiv:14).

VI. Battle at Gibeon.

It was the most remarkable battle in Israel's history. There was no day like it, nor ever after, because the Lord hearkened unto the voice of Joshua. The Lord fought for Israel. The sun stood still, and the moon stayed until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. This is a prophetic type of the coming day of the Lord. What will happen in that day? Habakkuk, seeing that day and describing its details, tells us, "The sun and the moon stood still in their habitation, at the light of thine arrows, as they went, at the shining of thy glittering spear. Thou didst march through the land in indignation; thou didst thresh the nations in anger. Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, for salvation with thine anointed; thou woundest the head of the house of the wicked by laying bare the foundations to the neck" (Hab. iii).

VII. The Division of the Land and Israel's Rest.

They came into the land, and the land was divided unto them by lot. Though it was not a permanent rest, yet the land had rested from wars for a time, and the tabernacle was set up at Shiloh. The prophetic Word tells us, that when Israel is brought in, they shall no more be plucked out of the land. There is in store for them a great Sabbath, a great Jubilee, when His people and His land will have rest. It will be after the Lord has come. Then the land will be re-divided. See Ez. xlvii–xlviii. Israel's land will then become, with its magnificent temple, the gloryland of this earth, the center of the Kingdom.

JUDGES

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The Book of Judges

Introduction

The previous book began with the statement: "Now after the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, it came to pass"; the Book of Joshua is, therefore, closely linked with Deuteronomy. The Book of Judges has for its opening word a similar announcement: "Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass." Judges is, therefore, the book which contains Israel's history after the occupation of the promised land and the death of Joshua. It covers about 320 years, extending to the judgeship of Samuel. In Acts xiii:20 we read: "And after that He gave them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet." This is a general statement and does not claim a chronological character. It is founded on the addition of the numbers mentioned in Judges. Some of these synchronize with others and must be deducted from the total.

"We find one express and clearly fixed chronological point in 1 Kings vi:1, according to which 480 years intervene between the departure out of Egypt, and the building of the temple, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign; after the necessary deductions have been made, about 320 years remain for the age of the Judges. The chronological data in the Book of Judges agree with this result, if the Ammonite oppression of the east-Jordanic territory (Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon) are assumed as contemporaneous with the Philistine oppression of the west-Jordanic territory. (Eli, Samson, Samuel.) In this case, Eli's priesthood preceded the term of Samson's labors; the first operations of Samuel (merely prophetic in their character), belong to Samson's term, and it was only after the death of the latter that he assumed the office of a Judge. It may, indeed, appear a singular circumstance, that the Book of Judges should not refer to Eli and Samuel, and that the two books of Samuel should not mention Samson, but both circumstances are readily and satisfactorily explained by the difference in the objects for which these books respectively were written. The books of Samuel design to relate the history of David, the necessary introduction of which is an account of Saul, Samuel, and Eli, the events of whose lives are interwoven with those which belong to the earlier years of

David's career; and here no reference whatever to Samson was required. The Book of Judges, on the other hand, relates nothing concerning Eli, because he was not a Judge, in the peculiar sense of that word, but presided over public affairs merely in the capacity of a high-priest; and it related nothing concerning Samuel, since his later acts, when he officiated as a Judge, no longer belong to the period of Israel's repeated apostasy from Jehovah, which it is the design of this book to describe." *

The main part of the Book of Judges is given to the sad history of Israel's departure from God, their chastisement and deliverance through the mercy and faithfulness of the Lord. The divinely given predictions through Moses, recorded in Deuteronomy, are now seen passing into history. Joshua's warning is being fulfilled. "Know for a certainty that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of those nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your side, and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this good land which the Lord our God hath given you." (Josh. xxiii:13.) The whole nation disintegrates. All goes to pieces. The whole sad story of decline is written in two statements, one at the beginning and the other at the end of the book. In the beginning of this book they asked the question of who is first to go up to fight the Canaanites. (Chapter i:i.) At the end they ask who is to battle against their own, to fight the children of Benjamin. (xx:18.) They began in the Spirit and ended in the flesh. First, they fought the common foe, then they fought each other.

The Book of Judges, therefore, records the complete failure of the people of God and the graciousness of the Lord. Perhaps nowhere else in the Word of God do we find the patience and faithfulness of Jehovah towards an unfaithful and backsliding people so fully made known as in Judges.

The instruments Jehovah used were the Judges. They were raised up by God in the days of declension to bring about deliverances from the enemies, who had been permitted to bring Israel into servitude. They were, therefore, more than what the word Judge in our language denotes. They were Prophets in action. Their persons show how God has chosen the weak things to accomplish His purposes. One was left-handed. Another used an ox-goad; still another pitcher and trumpets and one had for a weapon the jawbone of an ass. One was a woman. There were thirteen Judges. Six declensions are clearly marked by the phrase that the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. (iii:1, 12; iv:1; vi:1; x:6; xiii:1.) And these six main declensions resulted in corresponding punishments followed by gracious deliverances through the Judges.

* J. H. Kurtz in Sacred History.

What is the value and meaning of this historical book? If it has no other object beyond acquainting us with Israel's history, a deeper study would indeed be useless.

Again we refer to that familiar New Testament word, which fully authorizes us to read these histories in their typical bearings. "Now all these things happened unto them as types; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come." (1 Cor. x:11.) "For as many things as have been written before have been written for our instruction, that through endurance and through encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." (Rom. xv:4.)

We have learned from the study of the Pentateuch, especially from the history of Israel in Egypt, her experiences in the wilderness and entrance into the promised land, how indeed all these things are types and what blessed lessons are written everywhere for our instruction. The history of the Book of Judges finds also a most interesting and important typical application. The Book of Joshua typifies the heavenly blessings of the people of God and the heavenly inheritance (corresponding to Ephesians). The Book of Judges unfolds in a typical way the sad story of the decline, apostasy, dissension and corruption of the professing church on earth. The different errors and evils of Christendom may be traced here as well as the different revivals and restorations. The flesh and the world and what allegiance these lead to, slavery and misery with distance from Jehovah, and how the Lord can deliver and bring back His people, are the prominent lessons of this book. Like Joshua and the Pentateuch, Judges is so full and rich in these spiritual types and instructions that they cannot be exhausted. We touch upon these things in the analysis and annotations. May they prove to be helpful hints to a deeper study of this neglected book. And blessed are we if we discover our individual experience, our failures, our need and the faithfulness of our gracious Lord in this book and thus learn more of Him.

The Division of the Book of Judges

The history of the different declensions in Israel, their oppression by the enemies, and the work wrought by the Judges the Lord raised up, begins with chapter iii:5 and is continuously related to the end of chapter xvi. The opening chapters of the book are a general introduction, part of which touches upon the contents of the book itself. Chapters xvii-xxi are an appendix to the main part. The events recorded in these closing chapters must have occurred a little while after the death of Joshua, during the life-time of Phinehas, the high-priest (xx:28). They give a glimpse of the sad internal conditions of the people, how every man did that which was right in his own eyes. Their complete failure towards God and towards themselves as the people of God is clearly seen in these records.

This gives us a threefold division of the Book of Judges.

I. **THE INTRODUCTION. ISRAEL'S FAILURES AND THE RESULTS.** Chapter i-iii:4.

1. **Israel's Failure in mingling with Canaanites.** Chapter i.
2. **The Angel at Bochim. The history of the entire Book.** Chapter ii-iii:4.

II. **THE DECLENSIONS, PUNISHMENTS AND DELIVERANCES.** Chapter iii:4-xvi.

1. **The Sin of Idolatry. Othniel.** Chapter iii:5-11.
2. **Second Declension. Under Moab. Ehud and Shamgar.** Chapter iii:12-31.
3. **Third Declension. Under Jabin. Deborah and Barak.** Chapter iv-v.

4. **Fourth Declension. Under Midian. Gideon, Tola and Jair.** Chapter vi-x:5.
5. **Fifth Declension. Under the Philistines and Ammon. Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon and Abdon.** Chapter x:6-xii.
6. **Sixth Declension. Under the Philistines. Samson.** Chapter xiii-xvi.

III. **THE APPENDIX. ISRAEL'S INTERNAL CORRUPTION.** Chapter xvii-xxi.

1. **Micah's Idolatry and its punishment.** Chapter xvii-xviii.
2. **Israel's moral condition. The War on Benjamin.** Chapter xix-xxi.

Analysis and Annotations

I. The Introduction. Israel's Failure and the Results.

Chapter i-iii:4.

1. Israel's Failure in mingling with the Canaanites.

CHAPTER I

1. The Question and the Answer. Verses 1-4.
2. Adoni-Bezek. Verses 5-7.
3. Jerusalem. Verse 8.
4. Judah's Victory and Failure. Verses 9-21.
5. The Children of Benjamin and their Failure. Verse 21.
6. The Failures of Others. Verses 22-36.

The book begins with an inquiry of the Lord. This was immediately after the death of Joshua. From chapter ii: 7-10 we learn that the people served the Lord during the days of Joshua and the Elders who had seen the great works of the Lord and who outlived their leader. Israel looked to the Lord for guidance. They feel their dependence upon Him. How different the history of His people would have been if they had maintained this dependence on the Lord, and acted always in subjection to Him! And the Lord answered the inquiry as He always delights to answer those who put their trust in Him. Judah is to go up to fight against the Canaanite, and the Lord promises victory. The first sign of weakness follows at once. Judah invites Simeon his brother to go with him to fight against the Canaanites, and he promises in return to help Simeon in conquering his lot. It showed that Judah had not full confi-

dence in Jehovah. He put some dependence in his brother, as if he needed his help to gain the promised victory. How often His people have dishonored the Lord by trusting in something besides Himself. Judah going forward by divine command, yet asking the help of Simeon, gained victories, yet he could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, for they had chariots of iron. (Verse 19.) What is iron to omnipotence! Had Judah gone forth in utter dependence on Jehovah and in His promise, "I have delivered the land into his hand," the chariots of iron would not have stopped him.

But there were great victories, the blessed assurance that Jehovah is with His people, if they go but forward. Adoni-Bezek is punished in the same manner as he in his wickedness had done to others. Infidels have often found fault with the extermination of the Canaanites. The confession of Adoni-Bezek answers these objections. "As I have done, so God hath requited me." Their punishment was just and well deserved.

The eighth verse is of interest. In Joshua x:i Jerusalem is mentioned for the first time in the Bible and that in connection with war. Here the city is smitten by the sword and burned with fire. This has been her history over and over again, and will be again in the future, till the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

Then there is mentioned once more the most refreshing picture of Caleb, Othniel and Achsah. (See Joshua xv:16-19.) Othniel, which means "lion of God," is the center of it. God delights in whole-heartedness and the victories of His people.

The rest of this first chapter has failure stamped upon it. Benjamin, the warrior tribe permitted the Jebusites to dwell with them and did not drive them out. There is not even a reported attempt. The command of the Lord was wholly ignored by them. They were in the worst condition. (Chapter xx-xxi.) Manasseh failed. Ephraim did not drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer. Zebulun, Asher and Naphtali all failed to dislodge the enemies God

had commanded them to destroy entirely. And Dan instead of conquering was conquered. The Amorites forced them into the hill country. Unbelief, lack of confidence in Jehovah, was the cause of it all. These enemies here are typical of the flesh and the fleshly lusts in the believer. And these lusts, the carnal nature, must be put and kept in the place of death. We are enabled to do this by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit, who is given to us of God. If we walk not in the Spirit, that is, in faith, we shall be overcome by these things; instead of conquering we will be conquered. The old nature not triumphed over will bring us into bondage as it is with so many of God's children.

2. The Angel at Bochim. The History of the Entire Book.

CHAPTER II-III:4

1. The Angel at Bochim. Verses 1-5.
2. Israel's Obedience Remembered. Verses 6-10.
3. Israel's Strange Gods. Turned from God to Idols. Verses 11-15.
4. Israel's History Under the Judges Outlined. Verses 16-18.
5. The Nations Left to Prove Israel. Verses 19-iii:4.

The opening event of this chapter is significant. The angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim. This angel is Jehovah Himself. His own words reveal this fact. In Joshua's time after the land had been possessed the Angel of the Lord, Jehovah in visible form, was with them and as leader of the Lord's host led them on in the conquest. (Joshua v:13-15.) Israel had left Gilgal, the place where the reproach had been rolled away, the place of the "sharp knives," typical of self-judgment. It was for Israel the place of strength and power for victory, as it gave the flesh nothing to glory in. They had left Gilgal. How often we, who are crucified with Christ, leave our Gilgal and instead of glorying in the Lord and having no confidence in the

flesh, we too act in self-confidence. The place to which the Angel went was "Bochim." It means "Weepers." It was the best place for Israel to be after all their failures to do what the Lord had commanded them. It is the place today for us in the midst of the worldliness in which so many of the Lord's people have drifted, as well as the divisions which exist among those, who are members of the one body, and other evils besides. But Bochim, the place for weeping must be the place of self-judgment and confession. It was not so for Israel. They wept when the plain words of Jehovah told them their disobedience and when they heard what should follow. "I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you." But we do not read anything of a true repentance and return unto Jehovah.

From chapter ii:6-iii:4 we have the history of the whole period of Judges outlined. There is first mention made of their obedience and service, how they began in the Spirit. The second generation, as it is always the case, leads to failure. For the first time we read the words which, as already stated, appear in six other places in this book. "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord." They forsook Him, the loving, gracious Jehovah, whose kindness and tender mercies are so fully revealed in their past history and instead of serving such a God, they served Baal and Ashtaroth. Connected with this Canaanite "religion" were the vilest immoralities by which they were dragged down to the level of these doomed nations. All moral corruption, social and political confusion is the result of turning away from God. Romans i:19-32 reveals the awful steps down. Christendom in apostasy, turning away from God and from the Light, leads to moral corruption as well. Turning away from the Truth means being turned unto fables.

The Lord then acted in behalf of His backslidden people and raised up Judges. (Verse 16-18.) The result was recovery, and once more the people under these revivals rejoiced in victory over their enemies and the promised covenant blessings. Self-judgment, which is true repentance,

had to precede each revival. They cried unto the Lord; they sought His face, and then deliverance came. Even so it is in the individual experience of the children of God.

Yet in spite of these revivals in Israel the tendency is downward. "When the judge died they returned and corrupted themselves beyond their fathers . . . they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way." So it has been in the professing church. Revivals have come and gone, but it has not remedied the wayward conditions, and the departure from God and His Word becomes more and more pronounced till the final great apostasy is reached. The only complete deliverance can be the Coming of the Lord which we do not find fully revealed in the types of the Book of Judges.

II. The Declensions, Punishments and Deliverances

Chapter iii:5-xvi

1. The Sin of Idolatry. Othniel.

CHAPTER III:5-11

1. The First Declension. Verses 5-7.
2. Sold to the King of Mesopotamia. Verse 8.
3. The Deliverance through Othniel. Verses 9-11.

The first declension, bondage and deliverance is briefly related. We see how Israel went from bad to worse. First, the wicked nations they were to exterminate dwelt amongst them. Then the children of Israel established some relationship with them and dwelt amongst these nations. First, the children of Israel permitted them to exist in their midst; then the doomed nations gained the power over Israel and the people of God became dependent on them. The third step down is inter-marriage. They did exactly what Jehovah had forbidden. (Deut. vii:2.) Then they began to serve their idol-gods. It began by "forgetting the Lord." The application to the individual believer and to the professing church can easily be made. If He is forgotten, who has redeemed us and made us His own, an alliance with the world is soon formed and rapid decline follows. The same story is written in the message to Ephesus, which stands prophetically for the Apostolic age. "I have against thee that thou hast left thy first love." (Rev. ii:4.) Leaving the first love means to have no longer the Lord Jesus Christ as the all-absorbing object before the heart. Thus the de-

cline began in the church, and it always begins in this way in the individual believer.

Cushan-Rishathaim, King of Mesopotamia, becomes their Lord and they served him eight years. This king is the first punitive instrument in Jehovah's hands. His name very significantly reveals the very condition into which Israel had plunged. Cushan-Rishathaim means "the blackness of double wickedness." They had become doubly wicked, leaving Jehovah and serving strange gods.

When they cried unto the Lord out of the depths of their misery and sin, casting themselves once more upon Jehovah and turning their backs upon the strange gods, the Lord answered and sent a Saviour * who saved them. It is the same Othniel of whom we read in chapter i:13 and Joshua xv:18. Othniel means "Lion of God," and as he was of Judah, he is the type of Him, who is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Upon him rested the Spirit of the Lord. The King of Mesopotamia was given into his hands, and a rest of fifty years followed for Israel. Thus we too must return to the Lord and expect our deliverance from Him. What grace towards His people is manifested in this first deliverance!

2. Second Declension Under Moab. Ehud and Shamgar.

CHAPTER III:12-31

1. The Second Declension—Serving Eglon, King of Moab. Verses 12-14.
2. Ehud Raised Up. Verse 15.
3. Eglon, King of Moab, Slain by Ehud. Verses 16-25.
4. Moab Subdued and the Eighty Year Rest. Verses 26-30.
5. The Deliverance by Shamgar. Verse 31.

When they continued to do evil Jehovah used Eglon King of Moab to punish their disobedience and evil-doings. With him there is Ammon and Amalek, a trinity of evil. The city of Palms is Jericho (Deut. xxxiv:3) a type of the world, as we saw from Joshua. Moab pictures typically an outward,

* The authorized version has deliverer. The correct translation is saviour.

empty, Christian profession. Amalek is the type of the lusts of the flesh which flourish with those, who have the form of godliness but deny the power thereof. How many to-day have become captives of Moab! The greater part of Protestantism, with a name to live, yet dead, is in that deplorable condition.

They served Eglon eighteen years. For the second time they cried unto the Lord and again He answered graciously by raising up Ehud, the son of Gera, the left-handed Benjamite. The story of the deliverance wrought by him is interesting. Without repeating the history of the chapter we give briefly its typical meaning. Ehud's father was Gera, which means "meditation." This is needed first of all to get deliverance from a mere profession or world prosperity with its attending evils to bring the soul to a blessed realization of its possessions and blessings in Christ. Ehud means "I will give praise." Here is the deliverance for God's people out of a dead formalism. Meditation on the Word leads to a believing possession of the realities of redemption in our Lord Jesus Christ. This is followed by praise, the confession of His Name. Then Moab's bondage is ended.

Ehud was left-handed, showing the weakness of the instrument. The two-edged dagger is the type of the Word of God, while the hand which grasps it illustrates how faith is to use the sword of the Spirit. Then Ehud, the Son of Gera, the left-handed, thrust the two-edged dagger into the fat belly of Eglon. Fat is the emblem of prosperity, the prosperity of the world by which so many of God's people become captivated. The sword of the Spirit must be plunged into that which is of the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.

"Face to face in this solemn place, in solemn silence and alone they stand; the fat, prosperous World; and poor, left-handed Faith. The scene is quickly over. Into the very belly of Eglon sinks the sharp sword of Ehud; the very belly, the centre of all that is of the world and not of the Father; of 'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, the

pride of life'; that which flesh serves (Phil. iii) and which is never satisfied, is pierced through and through. With what result? *Its true nature is fully exposed.* Let us not be so falsely delicate as not to profit by this strong-worded truth. The prosperity of the world, fat and flourishing as it appears externally, is seen under the stroke of God's word—in the light of Jesus, whom it crucified, being the Son of the living God—as nothing but *'dirt.'* Yea, so says another Benjamite, who well knew how to wield that sword: 'I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but dung* that I may win Christ and be found in Him.' How much does this leave of fat Eglon alive?'' *

Then the trumpet of victory was blown. Even so is our faith the victory which overcometh the world.

Shamgar's work seems to have been closely connected with that of Ehud. He smote the Philistines with an ox-goad. The ox-goad is like the sword, an emblem of the Word of God. Then the land had rest for eighty years.

3. Third Declension. Under Jabin, Deborah and Barak.

Chapter iv-v

CHAPTER IV

1. Sold into the Hand of Jabin. Verses 1-2.
2. The Cry of the Children of Israel. Verse 3.
3. Deborah and Barak. Verses 4-11.
4. The Conflict and Jael's Deed. Verses 12-24.

Ehud the mighty instrument of Jehovah had died, and again the children of Israel lapsed into evil. Then the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin, King of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor. His captain was Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles. A powerful oppressor he was, for this King had nine hundred chariots of iron and oppressed Israel twenty years. About one hundred and thirty

* Notes on Judges.

years before Joshua had overcome Jabin, King of Hazor. "He took Hazor and smote the King thereof with the sword, for Hazor before him was the head of all these kingdoms." All were slain and Hazor was burnt with fire. And now the Lord sold them into his hand. This Jabin is a successor of the one whom Joshua had killed. Hazor had been built again out of its ruins. We see, so to speak, a resurrection of an old enemy. It is significant too that this declension and captivity under Jabin is the third one. As mentioned in annotations on Genesis (pp. 18-19) the number three stands everywhere in the Word for revival and resurrection. The former enemy enslaves Israel once more. How often has this been the case in the history of the church, and how true it is to-day. Satan knows how to revive old errors and evils and use them to bring God's people into captivity. And is it not so in our individual experience? Some sin which overpowered us was through the grace and strength of Christ and of His Spirit mastered, and its power broken. But can that same sin not be revived? Is it forever gone? If there is neglect of prayer, no child-like dependence in true humility, no watchfulness, it will, like Jabin, return and domineer over us in even greater power than before. Jabin means "discerning"—"understanding." This city Hazor, where he dwelt, means "enclosure." This Jabin represents human intellect, the understanding of the natural man, which is corrupt and opposed to God and to His revelation. It is the wisdom of the world. Jabin is in his own "enclosure," which rejects and excludes what God has given. The Christian believer is called upon to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. "Casting down imaginations (reasonings), and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought to the obedience of Christ." (2 Cor. x:5.) Man's own thoughts, his natural understanding, must be completely subjected to God's Word. How much of this spirit of exaltation against the knowledge of God is about us and in the professing church! Higher criticism belongs here. All the errors in doctrine, affecting always the Person of our Lord,

are the results of putting the thoughts of man above the Word of God. Then in connection with this we must think of the sects and parties, the works of the flesh, that is the natural man and his reasonings, which have divided the body of Christ. These divisions are "the enclosures" of Jabin. "As the enemy of the people of God, it is the wisdom of the world with which we have here to do—a wisdom which reigns in its own 'enclosure,' shut up, as is the constant fashion, in cliques and parties and philosophies, by which it elevates itself over what is outside its boundary. The spirit of it is easily manifest as that of self: self-interest, self-assertion, self-satisfaction, the true 'trader' or Canaanite spirit, that of gain. The inroad of this into the Church was early indeed. 'All seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ,' was said, in the apostle's days, of those at Rome. (Phil. ii. 21.) Of the Ephesian elders it was prophesied, 'Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.' (Acts xx:30.) But already at Corinth the sects and parties produced by such attempts were being formed, as we know, and the true people of God were becoming subject to Jabin's rule; and this has developed much more widely since, even until the Church of God has been broken up into various denominations, to the dishonor of the *One* Name which is upon us all." *

Then once more the children of Israel cried unto the Lord. Jabin's mighty oppression and the humiliation connected with it had become so great that they turned to the Lord. How beautiful it is to see throughout these declensions, that the Lord seemed to just wait for this one thing, His people to cry to Him. As soon as they cried He answered. He is the same to-day. How willing and ready He is to break all the chains of His people and save them from the hands of all their enemies! True revivals always started in deep humiliation, in self-judgment, in prayer. But alas! the state of such, who have departed from the faith, who are the willing captives of Satan, who love this present evil

* F. W. Grant.

age and who do not cry to the Lord! The Lord brought deliverance through a woman, Deborah, the prophetess. The weaker vessel is now summoned to judge. The name Deborah means "The Word." It is the Word and the Word of God alone which can deliver from the wisdom of this world and from error and sin. But Deborah is married. She is the wife of Lapidoth. Lapidoth means "firebrands." He is typical of the Holy Spirit. The Word, and the Spirit in the Word give the victory and deliver. And Deborah did not dwell in an "enclosure." She dwelt under the palm tree between Ramah and Bethel. The palm tree typifies the spiritual prosperity of the believer. This we enjoy if we let the Word in the power of the Spirit judge us. Then we have our Ramah (heights) the blessed knowledge of our standing in Christ and Bethel (House of God) our fellowship with Him. That is where our palm tree, our spiritual blessing lies.

Deborah sent for Barak. Barak means "Lightning." Here we have judgment indicated. The Word calls for judgment and judgment will surely come, as it was executed through Barak upon Jabin and his host.

And so this age ends with the lightning flash of judgment, when the bundled up tares will be burned with fire. All the wisdom of this world, higher criticism, Christian Science, falsely so-called, and every other form of evil will then pass away. All error will end forever with the coming of our Lord. But there is a second woman mentioned in this chapter, Jael the wife of Heber. She slew Sisera, the wicked captain of Jabin, with the tent pin. Her deed is specially celebrated in song.

The Song of Deborah and Barak.

CHAPTER V

1. The Praise of Jehovah. Verses 1-5.
2. The Condition of the People and their Deliverance. Verses 6-11.
3. The Celebration of the Victory and the Victors. Verses 12-22.
4. The Fate of the Enemy. Verses 23-31.

This is one of the prophetic songs of the Bible. It is full of the fire of passion and enthusiasm, reflecting the character of the woman through whom the deliverance had been wrought. It has been classed with the barbaric outbursts of the battle-hymns and odes of triumph of heathen nations, likened to some wild chant of a victor, whose blood-thirst has been quenched in the cruel overthrow of his enemies. Such estimates of this song, so often made by the critics of the Bible, are incorrect. Deborah speaks as a prophetess. She begins with ascribing praise to Jehovah; she ends with Jehovah. This prophetic outburst is marked by limitations. She has no glimpse of the final victory which is mentioned in other songs of triumph, and especially in the Psalms. There are phrases which the Holy Spirit utters through Deborah, which He used in other prophetic songs. The following passages of Scripture may be compared with Deborah's words and will be helpful in the closer study of this chapter. Exodus xv:1-9; Deut. xxxii:1-3; 16-17; Psalms lxviii:1-4; 8, 11; 34-35; Psalms lxxxiii:9-10; Habak. iii:1-4; Psalms xviii:7; Psalms lxxvii:11-12 Luke i:28; 71-74.

While all this is true and we do not forget that Deborah was the chosen instrument, raised up to effect the great deliverance, we also must recognize the strong human element which is so prominent. One must beware of giving to the deeds done, especially to the deed of Jael in its details, divine sanction and endorsement. It was an act of courage and of faith; she was moved by faith and that faith led her to kill Sisera, the enemy of Israel.

"The act of Jael, who smote a nail into the temples of the sleeping Sisera, does not claim our approbation; still, when we estimate the character of the act, the extenuating circumstances are entitled to attention—the times in which she lived, her ardent and enthusiastic devotion to the cause of Israel, the general and glowing hatred of the tyrannical oppressor of the people, etc. If such considerations are allowed to plead in favor of a Charlotte Corday, much more appropriately do they vindicate the act of a Jael. The

same remark applies to the act of Ehud, which, according to our moral principles, was an assassination worthy of reprobation alone.'' *

Meroz is especially mentioned. (Verse 23.) Deborah speaks with authority then, and has her message from the Angel of the Lord. He said: ''Curse ye, Meroz, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.'' Meroz might have helped, but they lived there in luxuries. Meroz means ''built of cedars''; they dwelt in palaces of cedars and lived in ease, unconcerned about the condition of their brethren. And the angel of the Lord said that they did not call up to the help of the Lord. The indifference they manifested in not helping their brethren is thus charged as not helping the Lord against the mighty. As in the New Testament so here the Lord identifies Himself with His suffering people. God deliver His people to-day from the indifference of Meroz, which is high treason against the Lord and His cause! Verses 24-31 are a vivid description of what took place. The mother of Sisera is seen awaiting the return of her victorious son. She expects nothing but good and her wise ladies are with her. It is a remarkable irony. Thus all the enemies of Jehovah will perish, while for those who love Him there is glory and rest in store. Deborah could only express a longing that the enemies might perish, and those that love Him be as the sun in might and splendour. It was her prayer. We know more through the full light of prophecy how the enemies of God will perish and the Glory which shall be for those who love Him.

* Sacred History—Kurtz.

4. Fourth Declension. Under Midian. Gideon, Tola and Jair.

Chapter vi-x:5

Under Midian. Gideon raised up.

CHAPTER VI

1. Israel's Suffering from Midian. Verses 1-6.
2. Their Repentance and the Divine Answer. Verses 7-10.
3. Gideon, the Deliverer, Chosen. Verses 11-24.
4. The Restored Worship. Verses 25-32.
5. The Gathering for the Conflict. Verses 33-35.
6. The Sign of the Fleece. Verses 36-40.

After Deborah and Barak the land had fifty years' rest, and when again they did evil they were delivered into the hand of Midian for seven years. It was a most cruel oppression which they suffered and on account of their repeated unfaithfulness. They sank now lower than during the previous declensions and captivities. They were stripped of everything and greatly impoverished. The Amalekites came also and made common cause with Midian against Israel.

The word Midian means "strife." Midian is typical of the world in its opposition to and separation from God. Midian and Moab are often seen together. Both typify the world as the enemy of God. The Midianites with Moab tried to get Balaam to curse Israel. (Num. xxii:4.) Moab and Midian were the means of bringing God's judgment upon Israel through the woman Balaam brought into the midst of God's people. Then Israel was joined to Baal-Peor, and the Lord told Moses: "Vex the Midianites and smite them." (Numbers xxv:17.) Amalek represents the flesh with its lusts. The world and the flesh ever combine to enslave God's people and rob them of their blessings; "greatly impoverish them" as Midian did to Israel. How the Church has been spoiled by Midian and is to-day in the sad condition typified by Midian's power over Israel, we cannot fol-

low at greater length. The world is in the church—separation is given up and the methods of the world have become the methods of the church. In the church message to Pargamos, Balaam and the stumbling-block he cast before the children of Israel, is mentioned. It represents that period of the church when the church gave up her separation and settled down in the world.*

And the same application of Midian must be made of the individual believer. How God's Word warns against the world and the corruption which is through lust. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John ii:15.) "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (James iii:4.)

When they cried to the Lord a Prophet was sent to them. The deliverer they looked for is withheld for a time to deepen their need and burden their souls with a greater sense of the evil they had done. The unnamed Prophet brings therefore a twofold message: The message of God's faithfulness and the message of their disobedience.

Next we see an angel of the Lord under an oak in Ophrah. Gideon the son of Joash threshed wheat by the winepress to hide it from the Midianites. The angel greeted him. "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour." And Gideon addressed him telling out the burden of his soul. If the Lord be with us why then is all this befallen us? But now the Lord hath forsaken us. It was the language of despair. "Then the Lord looked upon him and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the land of the Midianites; have not I sent thee?" And still Gideon is reluctant to believe the message and the Lord tells him "Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man." The Lord had called him, and

* The seven church messages in Rev. ii and iii are prophetic of the history of the church on earth. Pergamos is that period which began with Constantine.

when He calls He also fits for the service and is with the servant. Oh! the blessed word "I will be with thee." And the One who spoke to Gideon is the same, who has left to us the precious word, "Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world." Then Gideon brought his offering upon the rock, and the Angel of the Lord with his staff brought the fire which consumed it all, while He departed from Gideon's sight. Then it dawned upon Gideon that he had been face to face with Jehovah, and he feared death. A blessed message came to him then. "Peace be unto thee; fear not; thou shalt not die."

Then he built his altar and called it "Jehovah-shalom —the Lord is peace. All is full of meaning. The offering he brought typifies Christ; so does the rock upon which it was brought. The fire consumed it all, carried it upward to God. And upon that the assurance of peace is given. Even so He is our peace. Blessed be God for such a precious, beautiful name—"Jehovah-shalom"—the Lord is peace. So we need not to fear, for He has made peace through the blood of His cross, and He is our peace. And therefore like Gideon we need an altar to worship. True peace with God, and the enjoyment of Himself as our peace, leads to worship, yea, it demands worship. Such the Father seeketh. As holy priests we come, made nigh by His precious blood, and bring our spiritual sacrifices. If Christ were constantly enjoyed, the facts of our redemption of blood never forgotten, Midian, this poor world, could never impoverish us. And deliverance out of worldliness and a new separation unto Him must needs have for its starting point a heart — return to Himself, who is our peace.

Then Gideon does what his name (cutter down) means. Baal's altar must fall down. He began his great work at home. It was a bold deed by which he put himself completely on the Lord's side and stirred up the wrath of the enemy. And then the enemies gather for the battle. The Spirit of the Lord then came upon Gideon. He was endued with the Spirit for the approaching de-

liverance. The enemies were coming in like a flood, but the Spirit of God lifted up a standard against them.

Finally Gideon asked his signs. He still hesitated. And the wonderful patience and condescension of Jehovah in meeting poor, wavering Gideon! The fleece in the midst of the ground is the type of Israel in the midst of the nations. The dew is a symbol of divine grace and mercy. It is the Lord who forsakes and who refreshes Israel. Israel to-day is like the fleece without the dew, while the ground, the Gentiles, possess of the Grace of God. But ere long the dew will fall upon Israel again and the time of their blessing and fulness will come.

The Victory of Gideon.

CHAPTER VII

1. The Sifting of Gideon's Army. Verses 1-8.
2. The Dream of the Midianite. Verses 9-15.
3. Victory through Weakness. Verses 16-25.

Gideon "the cutter down," now also called Jerubbaal "the contender with Baal," after his faith had been strengthened, pitched his camp at the well of Harod. ("Trembling.") The Lord did not need the large army he had gathered, lest Israel would say: "Mine own hand hath saved me." First 22,000 were let go. They were afraid. What an evidence of the sad conditions among the people. Jehovah had commanded through Moses this test. "And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, What man is there that is fearful and faint hearted? Let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart." (Deut. xx:8.) Faint heartedness and fear are but unbelief. Faith is courage and does not reckon with iron-chariots, with the powers of Midian, but with an omnipotent Lord. After the 22,000 had left, 10,000 remained and the Lord said again, "The people are too many." Only 300 were selected who took up water out of the brook in their hands as they drank.

Kneeling down, drinking in leisure, is the natural way for man to do. They showed thereby that they were inclined to take matters easy and to satisfy their need to the full. Taking the water into the hand and lapping it like a dog is not the natural way for man to drink. They were less absorbed with satisfying their natural wants. They showed thereby their eagerness to press on. Thus the army was narrowed down to the 300 whom the Lord would use in His service. How many of the Lord's people to-day like Gideon's army are unfit for service? Unbelief and too much occupation with earthly things, the creature wants, stand in the way.

To encourage Gideon still more the Lord permitted him to overhear how a soldier related his dream. That dream was like Nebuchadnezzar's great dream given by the Lord. The loaf of barley bread which smote the tent is another figure of the Word of God. Midian and Amalek, the world and the lusts of the flesh, can only be dealt with and overthrown by the Bread of life, the living and abiding Word of God.

Read in connection with Gideon's victory 2 Cor. iv:4-12. Here we find a blessed application. The light hath shined into our hearts, so that it might shine out. The pitchers, the earthen vessels, represent our old self. If the light is to shine out, the victory to be won, the old self must be broken to pieces.

Internal Strife. Gideon's Failure and End.

CHAPTER VIII

1. The Strife. Verses 1-9.
2. The Complete Deliverance. Verses 10-21.
3. Gideon's Failure and End. Verses 22-32.
4. Israel's Failure after Gideon. Verses 33-35.

Internal strife follows. The two princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb, were slain. (Chapter vii:25.) Oreb means "Raven" and Zeeb means "Wolf." Oreb, the Raven, is slain on the Rock and Zeeb, the Wolf, at the winepress. The Raven, the bird which represents darkness and evil,

is the type of corruption; the Wolf is the destroyer of the sheep. The rock and the winepress typify our Lord Jesus Christ and His Cross. There the victory over both was won. The internal strife was born in selfishness. Ephraim chided him sharply, because he had not called them to the fight. Gideon's wise and gracious answer averted the threatening dissension. How beautifully it illustrates Phil. ii:1-5. All church strifes begin with self-seeking vain-glory. The remedy is "in lowliness of mind let each esteem the other better than themselves."

A greater victory follows after the internal strife had been overcome. The men of Succoth and of Peniel, Israelites, mocked Gideon and refused him help. They were really secret allies of Midian. After the victory these mocking, half-hearted Israelites were whipped by Gideon with the briers and thorns of the wilderness to teach them the needed lesson. How often we also in half-heartedness, world-bordering and being occupied too much with earthly things, need the thorns and briers, anxieties, disappointments and sufferings to bring us into line.

When they wanted to make Gideon king he refused. But while he refused that honor he tries to grasp another, the priesthood. He gathers the gold to make a priestly ephod and put it in Ophrah. It became a snare for all Israel as well as for Gideon, for they went "a whoring after it." The gold was taken from the enemy. It was a self-glorification of the victor Gideon. He and all Israel forgot that the glory belonged to Jehovah. Gideon claimed an honor which did not belong to him. Even so it has been done on Christian ground. A false priesthood with man in place of the Lord and His work, the instruments used in the power of the Spirit of God exalted instead of Him who furnished the instrument, these are the lessons which may be traced here in Gideon's sad failure. How many a servant of Christ, forgetting I Cor. iv:7: "And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" has fallen into the same snare, and as a re-

sult lost his power and blessing! The many wives of Gideon and the concubine of Shechem tell the other side. Amalek (the flesh) spoiled him. Like priest, like people. Israel went whoring after Baal and forgot once more Jehovah.

Abimelech the King, and His Wickedness.

CHAPTER IX

1. The Murder of Gideon's Sons. Verses 1-6.
2. Jotham's Parable. Verses 7-21.
3. Scenes of Strife and Destruction of Shechem. Verses 22-49.
4. Abimelech's End. Verses 50-57.

The story of Abimelech is intensely interesting in its typical meaning. Abimelech was the offspring of an unlawful union: the son of Gideon and the concubine in Shechem. He was half Israelite and half Canaanite. Abimelech means "my father was king"; he claims therefore supremacy, lordship over the people Israel on the basis of succession. His father had refused that honor; the bastard offspring claims it. He gains his object by a conspiracy and by murdering the sons of his father, with the exception of Jotham, who hid himself. And this domineerer over the people bears the name of the Philistine kings.

This illustrates perfectly that corrupt system of Christendom which is half Christian and half Heathenish—Rome. It is like Abimelech—a bastard system. She is called in Revelation "Jezebel," the heathen woman who was married to an Israelitish king. Rome claims apostolic succession through Peter, who disclaimed any preëminence, but rather warned against "lording over God's heritage." Ecclesiastical assumption to control and govern the people of God, so prominent in corrupt Christendom, is clearly indicated in Abimelech's act of putting himself forward as king. And the murderous spirit of Abimelech is there likewise.

Jotham (meaning: Jehovah is perfect), the youngest son

of Gideon, is the witness against it. He uttered a parable from Gerizim. The Olive, the Fig-tree and the Vine refused to reign over the trees. The Bramble becomes king to devour with fire the cedars of Lebanon. He applied the parable to Abimelech, who had been made king.

"The tendency of man's heart is to make another king than God, to put leaders in His place, and thus to destroy the use and blessing for which the olive, the fig, the vine, the various gifts of God, are given. But just those who are really worthiest will most surely refuse to leave their spheres of happy service, their sweetness, and their fruit, to go to 'wave over,'—to flutter idly in the wind over the trees. Thus royalty comes naturally to the thorn-bush, which need give up nothing, but which has thus nothing in its gift but thorns,—such as, indeed, the men of Succoth (chapter viii:16) were taught with. But worse would come than this—the fire of God's wrath, which, from this side and from that, would destroy both king and people." *

Three years later the prediction in Jotham's parable comes true; fire came out from Abimelech and devoured the men of Shechem; and fire came out from Shechem and devoured Abimelech. It was God who sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem. Then there is the revolt of Gaal, ("loathing"), the son of Ebed ("servitude"), and he opposed Abimelech. Something similar came to pass in Christendom. On account of the domineering rule of Rome there was the revolt against her. The overthrow of the ecclesiastical oppressor was attempted. But Gaal's attempt fails. He is overcome. Abimelech and his officer Zebul are victorious. The revolt has failed. Even so to-day Rome is gaining, and those who "protested" once against her wickedness, now are following her pernicious ways once more. Abimelech's end was brought about by a piece of a *millstone* which a woman cast on him, and a young man thrust him through with a sword and he died. It was a fearful end in judg-

* Numerical Bible.

ment. Even so it is written of Babylon, the mother of harlots, Rome. "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great *millstone,* and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more." . . . "And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." (Rev. xviii:21, 24.)

Tola and Jair.

CHAPTER X:1-5

1. Tola Judging Twenty-three Years. Verses 1-2.
2. Jair Judging Twenty-two Years. Verses 3-5.

These are but brief records but not without meaning. Tola means, translated, "a worm." What a contrast with the proud, wicked, domineering Abimelech! Here is one, who takes the place in self-abasement. It reminds us of Him, whose voice we hear in the great Atonement Psalm "I am a worm and no man." Tola, no doubt, typifies our Lord in His humiliation. When Abimelech's awful rule is ended, He who was obedient unto death, the death of the cross, will come to reign in righteousness.

And this seems to be more fully brought to our attention in Jair, the judge, who followed Tola. His name means, "Enlightener." He is a type of our Lord in His coming as "the Sun of Righteousness." The thirty sons, who rode on thirty ass-colts and had thirty cities, must mean the rule of that kingdom to come in which His sons, His co-heirs, will have a part, as Jair's sons had authority over these cities.

5. Fifth Declension. Under the Philistines and Ammon. Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon.

CHAPTER X:6-XII

The Great Declension and Revival.

CHAPTER X:6-18

1. The Great Declension. Verses 6-9.
2. Their Cry and the Lord's Answer. Verses 10-14.
3. Confession and Self-judgment. Verses 15-18.

This is the greatest declension yet. They did evil again, served Baalim, Ashtaroth, the gods of Syria, Zidon, Moab, Ammon and the Philistines. They were then sold by the Lord into the hands of the Philistines and into the hands of the children of Ammon. Ammon has rightly been taken to typify rationalism in every form and the wicked doctrines, the denials of the faith, which follow in its train. Christian Science, Russellism, Higher Criticism, Seventh Day Adventism, Unitarianism and a host of other "isms" are of the Ammonite tribe. The Philistines typify ritualism. Like Ammon and the Philistines, these two enemies distress sorely the people of God from all sides. Then they cried unto Him and confessed their sins, and Jehovah reminded them of all His goodness in past deliverances and threatened them that He would not deliver them. "Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation." But when they continued to plead and to confess, when they put away the strange gods, when they began to serve Him again, though He had denied their first cry—His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel. What a compassionate Lord He is! Then they gathered together and encamped at Mizpah—the watchtower.

Jephthah and the Ammonites.

CHAPTER XI

1. Jephthah's Covenant. Verses 1-11.
2. The Messages to Ammon. Verses 12-28.
3. Jephthah's Vow and Victory. Verses 29-33.
4. Jephthah Keeps His Vow. Verses 34-40.

Jephthah the judge who delivered Israel from the servitude of Ammon was the offspring of an unholy union "the son of an harlot." Then he became an outcast and had to flee from his brethren. He dwelt in the land of Tob (meaning, "goodness") and vain, or worthless, men gathered unto him. Yet he was a mighty man of valor. He was therefore an humble instrument, despised and rejected by His own. But finally those who rejected him had to send for Jephthah to be their saviour from the hands of the children of Ammon. They had to own him as their leader, whom they had hated and cast out on account of his lowly birth. He reminds us of our Lord, who was hated by His own and who is yet to be their deliverer.

Jephthah means "He opens." Gilead, to which he belonged, means "witness." The enemy "Ammon," as we stated in the annotations of the previous chapter, typifies for us rationalism and the wicked errors connected with it, which distress the people of God. Here then we have in a simple yet blessed way the deliverance from those evils indicated. It needs "a true witness," one who "opens." The witness of an opened Word, the testimony of the Word of God and with it the Spirit of God, will make an end of error. It is the only true way to combat the wicked departures from the faith so prominent in the last days. How God in this book bears witness in types to the one remedy for all the declensions and backslidings of His people! Othniel has Debir "the Word"; Ehud with his sword, the sword of the Spirit; Shamgar and his ox-goad; Deborah and Lapidoth, the Word and the Spirit; the bar-

ley loaf which smote down Midian's tent and Jephthah, the one who opens, the true witness.

Jephthah made a hasty vow. It was bargaining with Jehovah, as Jacob did. And when his daughter met him first the awful vow was carried out. In reading the story one can hardly escape the literal offering up of the child.

"It is true that a mode of interpreting this vow and its fulfilment has been proposed, according to which Jephthah's daughter was not offered as a sacrifice, but devoted to a life of celibacy, and consecrated to the service of the tabernacle; and the confirmation of this view has been sought in the institution of an order of females who served before the tabernacle (Exod. xxxviii:8; 1 Sam. ii:22; Luke ii:37). Luther already remarked: 'Some maintain that she was not sacrificed, but the text is too clear to admit of this interpretation.' But stronger evidence of her sacrifice than even the unambiguous words of the vow afford, is found in the distress of the father, in the magnanimous resignation of the daughter, in the annual commemoration and lamentation of the daughters of Israel, and, particularly, in the narrative of the historian himself, who is not able to describe clearly and distinctly the terrible scene on which he gazes both with admiration and with abhorrence. The Law undoubtedly prohibited human sacrifices as the extreme of all heathen abominations (Lev. xviii:21; Deut. xii:31, etc.). But the age of the Judges had descended to a point far below the lofty position occupied by the Law." * And yet there are difficulties in connection with this literal interpretation. The word burnt-offering is in the Hebrew "an offering that ascends."

"The great Jewish commentators of the Middle Ages have, in opposition to the Talmud, pointed out that these two last clauses ('shall surely be the Lord's and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering') are *not* identical. It is never said of an *animal* burnt-offering that it 'should be to Jehovah,'—for the simple reason that as a burnt-offering

* Sacred History by Kurtz.

it *is* such. But where human beings are offered to Jehovah, there the expression is used, as in the case of the first-born among Israel and of Levi (Nu. iii, 12, 13). But in these cases it has never been suggested that there was actual human sacrifice. If the loving daughter had devoted herself to *death,* it is next to incredible that she should have wished to have spent the two months of life conceded to her, not with her broken-hearted father, but in the mountains with her companions.'' *

Whatever it was, one thing stands out very prominently, the loyalty of Jephthah to Jehovah and the obedience and surrender of the daughter.

The Strife. Jephthah's Death. The Other Judges.

CHAPTER XII

1. The Strife and the Slaying of the Ephraimites. Verses 1-6.
2. Jephthah's Death. Verse 7.
3. Ibzan, Elon and Abdon. Verses 8-15.

The strife of Ephraim and their question reminds us of what happened under the judgeship of Gideon. There the soft answer turned away wrath. How different it is here. Jephthah in self-exaltation shows a far different spirit. Notice the ''I'' in his answer. ''I was at great strife''—''I and my people''—''I called you''—''I saw'' —''I put my life in my hand.'' A great strife follows. The Gileadites take the fords of Jordan and those who said ''Sibboleth'' were slain. Horrible record! Forty-two thousand Ephraimites were murdered. And this sad extermination of brethren has its sequel in Christendom. Shibboleth means ''flood,'' that which divides. Sectarianism is undoubtedly in view here. How God's people have suffered under it and still suffer! It is true ''every test that divides the people of God from one another, and not from their enemies, is another false 'shibboleth.' '' May God graciously deliver His people from all sectarian strife,

* A. Edersheim.

which is but the work and the fruit of the flesh. (Gal. v:19-21.)

Three judges follow after Jephthah's death. These correspond in their typical meaning to Tola and Jair after Abimelech's lordship had been broken. Ibzan of Bethlehem. Ibzan means "shining"—"splendor." Then there is Elon, which means "strength"; and Abdon, the meaning of which is "service," the son of Hillel, "Praising." These three give us a little glimpse of "Him who will come in splendor and in strength"—that is "in power and great glory," to set things right. Then all strife and disorder will end and happy service and Praise will follow.

6. Sixth Declension. Under the Philistines. Samson.

CHAPTER XIII-XVI

Israel Under the Philistines. Manoah and His Wife. Samson Born.

CHAPTER XIII

1. Israel Delivered to the Philistines. Verse 1.
2. Manoah and His Wife. Verses 2-23.
3. Samson Born. Verses 24-25.

The sixth and last declension of Israel in this book is now before us. This section has deep and interesting lessons. The darkest period is reached. The Philistines lorded over Israel. We miss in connection with this declension the statement which occurs in every preceding departure from Jehovah: "And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord." Here is no cry recorded nor a return unto the Lord. It seems the greatest indifference controlled the people so that there was no desire to cry to the Lord. And when we come to the deliverance we find that it was an imperfect one. "He shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines" (verse 5), is the divine announcement of Samson's work. And how did he end?

He died as a captive of the Philistines. But what does the Philistine typify? He represents the religious man, one who has the form of godliness but knows not the power, the ritualistic Pharisee. We quote from "Notes on Judges."*

"Turning to the tenth chapter of Genesis, we find the genealogy of the Philistines. They are the children of Ham, and Ham is, as his name denotes, the 'black one' or sunburnt. Dark indeed, but darkened by the sun. God wanted a man who should show us, as in a figure, or picture, what He sees man who is turned away from Himself (Light) to be, so He brings on to the stage of this world a 'black man,' a man made black by the sun, and crystallizes the sorrowful truth in his name, 'Ham.' A very clear picture of the 'old man.' The sun has shone upon him indeed, but he has not received the light. He has rejected the Light—has not come to the Light, has hated the Light, and, of course, it has not enlightened him; but it must have had some effect. What is it? It has been only to *darken* him. We may truthfully say that if he had never had light he would not have been dark as he is, and the brighter the light, the darker he has become. Now this is surely the picture of the Pharisee rather than the Publican. It was the Pharisee, the religious man, who was warned "if the light which is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness." It was the Pharisee, the religious man, not the Publican, of whom the Lord testified that his deeds were evil. It was the Pharisee, the religious man of that day, who, with the very Light of the World—the true, bright Light shining clearly right before his eyes—*asked for a sign!* As if one should ask for a light at noonday—what would it prove but his blindness? Oh, blind Pharisee, Oh, dark Pharisee, Oh, thou child of Ham, thou unregenerate religionist, thou unconverted church-member, how great was, and is even up to this day, thy darkness—a 'black man' indeed!"

* By F. C. Jennings.

The marks of the Philistine are given as follows:

"*First.* Wherever there is an introduction of carnal principles—that is, principles that the flesh can understand and approve—into the things of God, there is the Philistine.

"*Second.* Wherever there is the teaching of some other way into the land of blessing than by the Red Sea and Jordan (the Cross of Christ) there is the Philistine.

"*Third.* Wherever there are claims to sole authority over the refreshing fountain of God's Word, which is then tightly shut up, there is the Philistine, for that is how his ancestors treated Abraham's wells.

"*Fourth.* Wherever you get uncertainty as to sins forgiven—a dread, cold fear that all is not well, for there is no knowledge of a sacrifice that takes away sin—there is the work of the Philistine.

"*Fifth.* Wherever you get principles that would bind the energy of faith, there is the Philistine. And one may still further question whether there are not other phases of Philistinism, far more subtle and dangerous in these last days, than these open expressions of it. The Philistine women of whom we shall read were not warriors, but they were always the ensnarers of the Nazarite."

And who is the deliverer out of the hands of the Philistine? A Nazarite.* Even so the heart knowledge of Christ, our blessed place in Him, as well as the *practical life of separation into which we are called,* is the power which delivers from the evil of Philistinism. The Angel of the Lord appeared to the wife of Manoah and later also to Manoah. Her name is not given. He announces to her, who was barren, the birth of a son, who was to be a Nazarite unto God from the womb. The mother herself was to abstain from wine and strong drink and defilement with any unclean thing. The messenger, the Angel of the Lord, is the same who had come from Gilgal to Bochim, the

* See our Annotations on Numbers vi of what the Nazarite is and represents. A careful perusal of that chapter is needed to understand the typical meaning of Samson.

Captain of the Lord's host, He who appeared to Moses in the burning bush, Jehovah Himself. When asked what is thy Name? He answers: "It is Wonderful" (see Isaiah ix:6). Then He ascended in the flame of the altar. Samson was born and Jehovah blessed him. The Spirit of the Lord even in his young days began to move him in Mahaneh-dan, the camp of Dan. (Dan means "judging.")

The First Deeds of Samson.

CHAPTER XIV

1. The Woman in Timnath. Verses 1-4.
2. The Killing of the Young Lion and the Honey in the Carcase. Verses 5-9.
3. The Marriage Feast and the Riddle. Verses 10-14.
4. The Riddle Answered. Verses 15-18.
5. Thirty Philistines Slain by Samson. Verses 19-20.

Samson was called of God to be a true Nazarite, but in his life which was to manifest the Nazarite character he failed. "He went down to Timnath" is a foreboding beginning. It was a step in the wrong direction. He stepped upon the territory of the enemy to enter into an alliance with the Philistines. He meets one of the daughters of the Philistines, a woman in Timnath. Two other women we find in Samson's life, an harlot of Gaza and Delilah. They are alike, representing the "wiles of the devil." They lead him all down and ultimately accomplish his downfall and death. Timnath means "portion assigned." He left his occupation to seek a portion with the Philistines. Yet it was of the Lord in the sense that He permitted it for a wise purpose. And in that wrong course he came to the vineyards of Timnath and met the roaring lion. The lion is the type of Satan. (Amos iii:8; 1 Pet. v:8.) He roared at the Nazarite, as Satan still roars against any one who bears the marks of separation unto God. Then in the power of the Spirit who came upon Samson he rent the lion as a kid. Then he saw the

woman and she pleased him well. Strange contrast! In the power of the Spirit he tore the lion and then falls victim to the enemy in another form. How often this is the case in the experiences of God's people. Afterwards he found in the carcase of the lion the swarm of bees and the honey, which he ate and also gave to his parents. "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness.* Our blessed Lord has conquered Satan and as the result of that mighty overthrow and victory, accomplished on the Cross, we have our meat, our sweetness, our salvation and blessing.

Then he is in very bad company. He went down to Timnath alone. He met the woman, then he made a feast and is surrounded by thirty Philistines as companions. He had allied himself with the enemy. And this compromise, this mingling with the enemies of the cross of Christ, is the common thing to-day and has led to the grieving of the Spirit and the loss of power. "For example, the modern system of revival—to which our Samson, in his failure, so closely answers—in which, whilst there doubtless often is more or less of true faithful service, yet to effect the end *an alliance even with the enemy is sought;* the aid of the world is sought in obtaining deliverance *from* the world! Fleshly attractions, eloquent speakers, exquisite music,

* Another application besides the above and also of the believer's personal experience in conquering by faith the enemy and receiving sweetness through it, has been suggested: "The occurrences which took place when Samson visited Timnath, the residence of the woman (the lion, and the honey afterwards found in the carcase), were highly significant, and adapted to instruct both him and his people. He seems himself to be aware, in some degree, of their importance, as he introduces them in his riddle. The lion, namely, is an image of the kingdoms of the world which are hostile to the kingdom of God; the attack, the struggle, and the victory thus acquire a symbolical meaning. The riddle also includes a truth of great importance, the evidence of which is furnished in manifold ways by the history of the world, and which admits of an appropriate application even to our times. The attack of the lion was an image of the Philistine invasion; the eater furnished Israel with meat and sweetness, the destroyer brought salvation and blessings with him; for the yoke of the Philistines was a chastisement, designed to lead the people to repentance, and terminate in their renewed acceptableness before God."

cunning schemes for gathering crowds to attract crowds; all the churches closed except one, thus awakening a natural excitement; all these are daughters of the Philistine, very fair, all serving religion and pleasing us well; but very, very dangerous. For whilst at first they may not appear serious, they point to the possibility of their becoming so in the future; nor do they ever radically aid, but always hinder, the Nazarite."

He gives the riddle to the Philistines and makes a wager. The woman, now Samson's wife, wept and continued till he told her the secret, "and she told the riddle to the children of her people." Here was his weak point, which eventually resulted in his shameful downfall and humiliating experience. He could not keep a secret. But it was all the results of his going down, forming an alliance with the enemy he was called to overcome. He did not see that he had stepped in the wrong direction. He blamed the Philistines and not himself. "If ye had not plowed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle." Then he slew thirty Philistines to make good his promise and thus openly declared his hatred and antagonism to the enemy for the first time.

The Conflict with the Philistines. Bound Yet Free.

CHAPTER XV

1. The Damage Done to the Philistines. Verses 1-8.
2. Bound by His Own Brethren. Verses 9-13.
3. The Deed with the Jawbone. Verses 14-17.
4. His Prayer and the Answer. Verses 18-20.

He discovered next the true character of the Philistines. His wife has been given to another. Nothing came of his alliance with the Philistines but trouble and unpleasantness for himself. Was it of the Lord when he took the 300 foxes* and the firebrands to destroy the corn, the

* Literal: jackals. It would have been hard work to catch 300 foxes, for they go alone, but jackals go in packs.

vineyards and olive-groves? We find that there is no record that the Spirit of the Lord came upon him for this work. He acted out of revenge, because they had given his wife to another, whom as an Israelite with the Nazarite vow upon himself, he should never have taken. It was anger and not a judgment commanded by the Lord. And touching the jackal, an unclean beast, he had defiled himself. How often God's people act in the same way in an undignified manner, biting and devouring each other and like Samson destroying corn, vineyards and olives, the types of spiritual blessings. Whenever an unchristlike spirit manifests itself among the children of God, the spirit of malice, envy and vain-glory, the people of God are robbed of their joy and peace. The Philistines paid him in the same coin. They burnt his wife and her father. Then he slew the Philistines with a great slaughter and dwelt in the rock Etam. (Literal: the cleft of the rock.) It was a safe place for him against "their ravening," the meaning of Etam. And we too have our safe place in the cleft of the rock. His own brethren bind him out of fear for the Philistines, but in the Spirit of the Lord he bursts now the new cords and with the jawbone of an ass he slew a thousand men. It is now faith which acts. It was a feeble thing he used; boasting was excluded. Nor was it his own physical strength which accomplished the deed, but the Spirit of the Lord, who had come upon him. The jawbone having done its work is cast away.

"He will not keep it. It might become a snare to him. Israel might go a-whoring after it as after Gideon's ephod. It has served his purpose, now let it go—after all it is nothing more than the poor jawbone of a dead ass! Oh, that we could learn something from this! It is such a day to exalt the poor, foolish instruments that God, in His goodness, may use. Do not we everywhere hear what a wonderful man is such a man! What marvellous power in the Gospel! What beauty of exposition! What magnetism! What a smart man is he! Yes, indeed, just as well might Samson say, 'What a powerful jawbone! What a

wonderful jawbone! What a magnetic jawbone!' No, no, put the poor jawbone where it belongs, lest it detract from the glory of Him to whom all glory alone is due.'' *

Then after the victory he thirsts and God cleaves a place in *Lehi.* ''God clave the hollow that was in Lehi'' and water flows forth to refresh him. A beautiful picture of Him who was smitten that the refreshing waters of life may flow forth.

Delilah and Samson. His Death.

CHAPTER XVI

1. In Gaza. Verses 1-3.
2. Delilah and Her Victory Over Him. Verses 4-20.
3. The Captive of the Philistines. Verse 21.
4. The Feast of Dagon and Samson's Death. Verses 22-31.

Down he goes again, and this time to Gaza, the Philistine stronghold. There he unites himself with a harlot. We are here reminded of the history of the church. The harlot typifies that system which in Revelation is called by the same name, she who seduces to commit fornication, Babylon the great, Rome. Rome is the capital of Philistinism, ritualistic Christendom, as Gaza was the capital of the Philistines. But the attempt of the Philistines to kill him fails. He carries the gates, posts and bars of the city and took them to the top of the hill before Hebron. We may see in it a little picture of the recovery from the power of the harlot in the Reformation movement. But it was not Samson's last visit and farewell to Gaza. We shall see him there again, stripped of his power, his eyes put out, a ridiculed captive. We find him first at Sorek. He is entangled with Delilah, which means ''exhausted.'' He loves her and she becomes the fearful instrument of his downfall. She is the type of the world, the fair, pleasure-loving, religious world, which aims, like Delilah, to rob the true Nazarite of his separation, the real power of

* Notes on Judges.

the Christian life. It would take pages to describe the subtilities, the cunning ways, the wiles of the fair Delilah of the last days. And even then we would have to say "not the half has been told." And how she presses upon the Nazarite! Again and again he deceives her and keeps his secret. He knows well she is after his destruction. Like a moth attracted to the light though burning awaits it, he goes back to the dangerous sport, till at last, vexed unto death, he tells her his secret. Again he sleeps upon her knees. The locks of hair fall under the razor. Then she, the fair Delilah, afflicts him. Her caresses become blows and his strength went from him. "And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him." Alas! the sad story, how it has been repeated in the individual experiences of many believers. Flirting with the unholy principles of this present evil age is a dangerous thing. Loving the world will end, if unchecked, in disaster for the child of God. And the remedy is the close walk in heart dependence and heart devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ. And thus it has happened and still more happens in our days with the church. Stripped of her strength, her confessed weakness, lowliness, separation and utter dependence on the Lord, the Philistines have come upon her, lulled to sleep by Delilah's wiles. There is a shaking too, like Samson's shaking. Efforts are made by a powerless church and they do not know that the power is no longer there, for the Spirit is grieved and quenched. That is the sad state of the professing church as seen in those of Laodicea. (Rev. iii:14-17.)

Oh, the sad picture the Nazarite shorn of his locks, naked in this sense; eyes put out, blind, bound in fetters, grinding in the mill! What sport the Philistines had with him! And is a church robbed of power, naked and blind not a sadder spectacle? The end of Samson was a great victory. He had learned his lessons. Thoroughly humbled and chastised he must have repented of all his sin and

folly. His hair grew again. He cries to Jehovah between the pillars, where he made sport. Then follows his prayer. "O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me; I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes." Then he bowed himself, and an awful catastrophe follows when the house collapsed and he and the vast multitude of Philistines were slain and buried in the ruins.

III. The Appendix. Israel's Internal Corruption

Chapter xvii-xxi

Micah's and Dan's Idolatry and Its Punishment.

CHAPTER XVII-XVIII

The Images Made and the Hired Priest.

CHAPTER XVII

1. The Stolen Money Restored and the Images. Verses 1-6.
2. The Levite Hired for a Priest. Verses 7-13.

The last five chapters of the book form an appendix. The events given did not occur after Samson's death, but they happened many years before. These chapters are not in chronological order but arranged in this way to teach the root of the evil and its results. This answers much, if not all, of the objections of the critics. These chapters reveal the internal corruption which existed in Israel during the different declensions. Idolatry and lawlessness are the two characteristic features. True worship and dependence on God is given up and then follows the dreadful fruit of this, which is hatred, strife culminating in lawlessness. The predictions in the New Testament reveal the same two phases. Departure from the faith is followed by moral corruption. (1 Tim. iv:1; 2 Tim. iii:1-4.) Then we find in these chapters a statement which does not appear elsewhere in the book. "There was no king in Israel" is the statement made four times. (xvii:6; xviii:1; xix:1; xxi:25.) A king was needed to remedy these sad internal conditions, this departure from God and strife of one against the other. This is an evident link with and preparation for the history which follows.

Even so in this age of evil, darkness and cunning lawlessness; what the world needs is a king, the King of righteousness and peace. When He comes order will be brought out of chaos, all strife and war, all bloodshed and lawlessness will cease.

Into what a scene this chapter introduces us! The thieving son, the cursing mother. He, for the fear of the curse (true faith was not there, but superstition), restores the money and that ungodly woman can say, "Blessed be thou of the Lord, my son." Then she uses two hundred shekels of silver and has two images made. Micah, whose wicked life belies his name (Micah means "who is like Jehovah"), had a house full of gods, made an ephod, teraphim and then "ordained" one of his sons for a priest. Then a wandering Levite passed by and to make his idolatrous worship a little more "religious" he hires the Levite to be a "father" and "a priest." He also promises him a yearly salary, his board and clothing. Then he settled down and said, "Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest."

There is no need of much comment. The typical application is seen at a glance. Here is a man-made god, a man-made worship and a man-made priest. Such is the state of ritualistic Christendom. Much of that which is called worship is simply man-made and dishonors God as much, or even more, than the idolatry of heathendom. And how the false priesthood is here typified! We have but one Priest as the people of God and that is our gracious Lord. Through His infinite grace all true believers are constituted priests with Him. We are a holy and a royal priesthood. Any other priesthood is man-made and a wicked assumption which has corrupted and is corrupting Christianity. The hirelings too are represented in this scene. Religious service is so much reduced to a commercial basis. And there is the delusion of thinking that the Lord must surely bless and give prosperity.*

*"The Levite himself is another sign of the times. He is of the Levites of Judah, has been for a while in Bethlehem-judah and wan-

The Danite Idolatry.

CHAPTER XVIII

1. The Danites Seek an Inheritance. Verses 1-12.
2. Their Robbery. Verses 13-26.
3. Laish Taken. Idolatry Consummated. Verses 27-31.

The history of this chapter is closely linked with the preceding. The tribe of Dan had failed to take the God-given inheritance (Josh. xix:40-46). "The Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain: for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley." (Judges i:34.) Then in self-will, entirely disregarding the will of God, they sent out spies to seek another inheritance. They meet Micah's priest, the hireling. Micah's idolatrous outfit including the hired priest are taken by the invaders. The hireling sees an advantage for himself, his "usefulness" is enlarged for filthy lucre's sake. Then they killed the people of Laish and set their city on fire. The whole tribe of Dan becomes idolatrous. We have in all a picture of complete apostasy.

2. Israel's Moral Condition. The War on Benjamin.

CHAPTER XIX-XXI

The Levite and His Concubine.

CHAPTER XIX

1. The Levite and the Unfaithful Woman. Verses 1-21.
2. The Fate of the Concubine. Verses 22-30.

The results of departure from God are now revealed in

dered away again to find, where he may, another temporary resting-place. His is the restless foot of a stranger where he might have claimed inheritance, and he is ready to find a home where he should have been a stranger. Little solicitation prevails with him: his sustenance, a suit of clothes, a salary, has prevailed with many in all ages of the world, and the Levite exchanges his ministry for priesthood in the house of Micah, where the idolatry of the place is sanctified with Jehovah's name. All this is simple enough to read by those that care, and Christendom has exhibited every detail of this transformation,—not, alas, as it would seem, a long process: a manufactured priesthood for manufactured gods, all covered with a fair name of orthodoxy, and men doing with great satisfaction what is right in their own eyes!"

the awful corruption and violence so faithfully recorded in this chapter. The moral condition of Israel has gone down to the same level of the Canaanites; they sank even lower than the nations whom God had doomed to destruction. We do not repeat the horrible details of this deed of lust and violence. Apostasy from God, rejection of the Truth is followed by moral corruption. Romans i:26-32 shows the vileness of the Gentiles, who turned their backs to the light and did not glorify God. 2 Tim. iii:1-5 contains the description of the moral corruption of the last days of the present age, the conditions of those who claim to be "religious" and yet are apostates. The days of Lot, with their vileness, are to precede the coming of the Son of Man. (Luke xvii:28-30.) Evidences that such moral corruption and violence exists to-day throughout professing Christendom are only too numerous.

The Horrible War.

CHAPTER XX

1. The Levite's Story. Verses 1-7.
2. The Uprising. Verses 8-11.
3. The Slaying of the Israelites. Verses 12-25.
4. Benjamin Exterminated Except Six Hundred Men. Verses 26-48.

This and the concluding chapter bring before us the awful harvest of what had been sown. "For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Gal. v:7.) They had sown the wind and now reaped the whirlwind. Violence and lawlessness result in the slaying of 40,000 Israelites and 25,000 of the tribe of Benjamin. Nearly the entire tribe was wiped out. From Dan to Beersheba into the land of Gilead they gathered at Mizpeh to hear the story of the Levite. Benjamin refused to give up the wicked men and instead of humbling themselves, acknowledging the dreadful guilt and bringing the guilty ones to judgment, they gathered themselves together to fight their

own brethren. Their company was small in comparison with the mighty host of Israel. The divine counsel was that Judah should go up first to battle with Benjamin. What a contrast with the beginning of the book! There they were to fight against the common foe; here against their own brethren.

"But to be fit to be used of God to deal with evil involves much more than readiness to be His instrument. They are *too ready,* as we see in the result. Their wrath is too prompt, too implacable, too unsparing. Theirs is the reckless haste of vengeance, and not the solemn discrimination of divine judgment. They remember not their own sins, bring no sin-offering to God, no tears of penitence. They build on their numbers; no doubt on the justice of their cause, also, but in self-righteousness and without self-suspicion. Thus they go up to smite, and they are smitten heavily, disastrously. Benjamin, the wrong-doer, is wholly victorious."

Here too are the lessons for God's people in judging what is evil amongst them. Then the children of Israel went to Bethel ("House of God") and with prayer and fasting waited on the Lord and brought the offerings. Then the Lord gave them the assurance of victory. Benjamin is smitten, their women and children are wiped out. Only six hundred men escaped to the rock of Rimmon. All their cities were burned.

To even greater scenes of violence, bloodshed and desolation this poor world, which has rejected God and His beloved Son, is hastening on.

The Repentance About Benjamin.

CHAPTER XXI

1. Sorrow of the People. Jabesh-Gilead Smitten. Verses 1-15.
2. The Restoration of Benjamin. Verses 16-25.

A tribe of the nation was almost entirely exterminated. Then the oath they had made not to give their daughters to wife to the Benjamites left assured the complete ex-

tinction of the tribe. The dreadful work they had done dawned suddenly upon them and weeping before Jehovah they said, "Why is this come to pass in Israel that there should be to-day one tribe lacking in Israel?" The answer surely was, it came to pass on account of their departure from God and their sins. Thus people ask when they behold the scenes of bloodshed and war, as we see in our times, why is this? and are even ready to blame God, instead of thinking of sin and its curse. Then once more they acted themselves and committed another deed of violence. Jabesh-Gilead is destroyed; only four hundred virgins are saved. These were given to the Benjamites. But what hypocrisy they showed in having a feast of Jehovah and commanding the Benjamites to steal the daughters of Shiloh! Failure and decline is written in this book. God's faithfulness towards His people whom He loves is not less prominent.

"This is Israel, the people of God: infirm and wavering where good is to be accomplished; quick and decisive where patience and forbearance would become them; tolerant of what is only against God; fierce and unsparing in judgment, save only of themselves; scrupulously keeping an insane oath, yet managing to evade it by a jesuitry that deceives no one. Such is the people of God, and such is Christendom to-day; and such it has been. Let us search our hearts as we read the record,—not given as a record without purpose in it. How solemn is the repetition at the end of what has been the text of these closing chapters: "In those days there was no king in Israel: *every man did what was right in his own eyes.*" *

* Numerical Bible.

RUTH

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The Book of Ruth

Introduction

This book, containing the beautiful story of Ruth, is closely linked with Judges. The beginning of the book makes this clear: "Now it came to pass in the days when the Judges ruled." The events happened during the period of the Judges. It therefore belongs next to that book. In the Hebrew Bible it occupies another place. We find it there next to the Song of Solomon, followed by Lamentations. Five books are called by the Jews "Megilloth" and are read by them at different feasts commemorating past events. The Song of Solomon is read during Passover; Ruth at Pentecost; Lamentations on the ninth day of the month Ab in memory of the destruction of Jerusalem; Ecclesiastes is read during the feast of Tabernacles and Esther they read when they celebrate Purim.

The author of the Book of Ruth is unknown. The conclusion of the book shows that it must have been written after David had been made king. However the late date assigned to it by the critics, after the exile, is incorrect. We do not enter into their arguments. Any intelligent reader must see at once that its place between Judges and Samuel is the right place, for it is as sequel to the former and an introduction to the latter. If we read the books of Samuel we discover that they do not contain any reference whatever to the ancestors of the house of David. To supply this deficiency is one of the reasons why this book was written. It is more than probable that Samuel is the author.

The story is so familiar that we do not need to repeat it in this brief introduction. Ruth the Moabitess is the chief

character in the story. She who was cursed by the law becomes married to Boaz and as we learn from the ending, Ruth is the great-grandmother of David. Her name appears therefore in the first chapter of the New Testament in the list of ancestors of Him, who is David's son and David's Lord. She is the third Gentile woman in the genealogy of our Lord. The two Canaanitish women, Tamar and Rahab, precede her. The promises made to Abraham that the Gentiles were to receive blessing through his seed are confirmed through the history of these Gentile women among the ancestors of David and our Lord.

The typical dispensational meaning of the story of Ruth is interesting and has many blessed lessons.* Ruth is often given as a type of the church, as the bride of Christ. This application is difficult to make and leaves much of the beautiful story unexplained. Naomi represents Israel in unbelief, widowed and in bitterness. Ruth is the type of the remnant, who is called and received back by grace (like the sinners of the Gentiles) identifying itself with Israel's ruin, as Ruth identified herself with Naomi. The Kinsman-Redeemer, who espouses their cause and through whom Naomi's bitterness is changed to joy, who marries Ruth, is the type of the Redeemer, Christ. We shall follow briefly this correct dispensational foreshadowing in the annotations. A special division of this little book is not needed. The story has been divided into four chapters which makes another division unnecessary.

* The best application we have seen is in the Numerical Bible to which we acknowledge our indebtedness.

Analysis and Annotations

CHAPTER I

The Story of Naomi. Orpah and Ruth.

1. Naomi and Her Sorrows. Verses 1-5.
2. The Return. Verses 6-13.
3. Orpah Turning Back. Ruth Cleaving. Verses 14-18.
4. Naomi and Ruth in Bethlehem. Verses 19-22.

The story begins with a famine. Elimelech, "my God is king," and Naomi, "Pleasant," leave Bethlehem, "the house of bread," to go to the land of Moab, the heathen country. The story ends in Bethlehem with a marriage. Naomi far from the land, in unbelief and bitterness, bereft of Elimelech, her two sons also dead, Mahlon, which means "sick," and Chilion "pining," pictures Israel's condition, away from the land, no longer married unto Jehovah, but forsaken. Like Naomi, Israel has had trouble upon trouble and sorrow upon sorrow. There is no hope for Naomi amidst the Gentiles in Moab, as there is no hope for Israel among the nations. Hearing that Jehovah had visited His people with bread, she arose that she might return from Moab. Then Orpah said farewell to remain in Moab, while Ruth, the Moabitess, clave unto Naomi. She had faith and the beautiful words she addressed to Naomi were the expression of that faith. Not alone did the poor Moabitish woman say "thy people shall be my people," but also "thy God my God." It was grace which had drawn her. She thus clung closely to Naomi, became one with her in all her misery, yet with a faith, a confidence in Naomi's God, which Naomi did not possess. When Israel sets her face homeward once more, there will be in the midst of the

unbelieving nation a remnant, searching for the promised blessing, longing for God, a remnant * which ultimately will come in touch with the mighty Kinsman-Redeemer and inherit through Him the promised blessings. This remnant is represented in Ruth, cleaving to Naomi. But the objection may be raised that Ruth was a Gentile. How can she represent the remnant of Israel? Israel through her unbelief has become practically the same which the Gentiles are. They are "Lo-Ammi," not my people. (Hosea i:9.) The grace which called and saved Gentiles will call and draw them. Therefore this remnant is called "according to the election of grace." (Romans xi:5-6.)

Naomi is back in Bethlehem, empty and with a bitter spirit. She calls herself "Mara" which means bitter. This pictures Israel's return in unbelief. And it was at the time of the barley harvest. The harvest, as our Lord tells us, is the end of the age. When that end comes, after the true church has been gathered home, Israel, like Naomi, with a believing, trusting remnant cleaving to her, represented in Ruth, will return.

CHAPTER II

Gleaning in the Field.

1. Ruth Gleaning in the Field of Boaz. Verses 1-3.
2. Grace Shown to Ruth by Boaz. Verses 4-17.
3. Ruth Hears Concerning Boaz. Verses 18-23.

Boaz comes now upon the scene. His name means "in Him is strength." He is called "a mighty man of wealth." As the kinsman-redeemer he is a beautiful type of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the One in whom there is strength, the rich One. Ruth knows at first little of

* Of this remnant called through the Grace of God, after the true church has left this earthly scene, the Prophetic Word has much to say. Read: Is. vi:13; x:21-22; xi:11; Micah iv:7; Zeph. iii:7; Ezek. ix; Matt. iv:1-3 and many other passages. In the Psalms we read the future prayers of this remnant, the sorrows and sufferings they will have and the glorious deliverance when the King comes.

him and the coming relationship with the wealthy One. Boaz is related to Elimelech, whose name "my God is king" is typical of Israel's faith. Through Elimelech only Naomi (the nation Israel) has a claim on Boaz. And she can only lay claim through Ruth. Even so Israel has a claim on the blessings promised to her through the remnant which returns to Him in the beginning of the harvest, the end of the age; that remnant, as stated before, is represented in Ruth. How simple and beautiful is the story which follows. The mighty man of valor knows evidently all about her, though he does not act at once in her behalf. He appears on the harvest field. Beautiful greeting he brings! "The Lord be with you"; and they answer him, "The Lord bless thee." Gracious are his words to her, who had cast herself upon his grace, for Ruth had said to Naomi, "Let me now go to the field and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace." She anticipated in faith, though she did not fully know what grace was awaiting her. Even so the remnant of Israel in the last days. How he permits her to continue in the humble work. He provides for her. She is only to glean in his field. She is not to be molested; his gracious power shields her. She can also drink of the water he provides. Then she falls on her face. Beautiful are her words of humility, "Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?" Then she hears from his lips that he knows all about her. More than that. He assures her of coming blessings, blessings Ruth will get because she trusted; blessings not of works, the law covenant, but of grace, because she believed. "The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust." All foreshadows dispensationally the soul-exercise of the believing remnant of Israel, when the harvest begins, and the gracious dealing of the Lord with that remnant. Another application may also be made on spiritual lines of a soul which seeks blessing and how the Lord deals in His grace

with those that seek Him. This we cannot follow in these brief annotations. Then he comes closer to her. She receives from his own hands. He also, unknown to her, gives instructions that "handfulls on purpose" are to be dropped, just for her. What evidences that the mighty, wealthy Boaz loves the poor stranger, Ruth! So the remnant will gradually learn of His love. And we also find our comfort here. We glean in His Word. It is typified by the wheat, the barley and the corn. Then when we feel our need and dependence on Him, and plead, as we always should, our ignorance, He drops the handsfull on purpose, so that we find just what we need for our spiritual sustenance and comfort.

And Naomi tells her something about Boaz. But she only calls him "one of our redeemers." She should have said he is the redeemer. The secret who he is and what He will do for her, the trusting Ruth, she will learn only from himself. So unbelieving Israel does not know the full story of Him, who is the Redeemer. Boaz, Christ Himself, will make it known when He reveals Himself in His Grace and Power to the remnant of His people.

CHAPTER III

At the Feet of Boaz.

1. Naomi Instructs Ruth. Verses 1-5.
2. At His Feet. Verses 6-7.
3. The Discovery. Verses 8-13.
4. The Six Measures of Barley. Verses 14-17.
5. He Will not Rest Until He Have Finished the Thing. Verse 18.

What follows in the realization of redemption must be connected with Leviticus xxv:25, the law concerning the redemption of an inheritance and the other law about the marriage of a brother-in-law as given in Deut. xxv:5-12. See the annotations on that passage.* Naomi gives instructions to Ruth which are based upon that law. But

* Annotated Bible. Vol. I. Deut. xxv.

notice it is the question of rest. "My daughter, shall not I seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?" She then is seen resting at his feet. Blessed truth indeed which even Naomi realizes, rest can only be found at the feet of the redeemer. This truth is known to all His beloved people. He promises rest and He giveth rest. Like Mary it is the good part for us to be at His feet.

But what is Boaz's occupation when Ruth seeks him to claim her full blessing? "Behold he winnoeth barley tonight in the threshing floor." The winnowing is a sifting process by which the wheat is separated from the chaff. Read Matthew iii:12. The threshing floor is Israel. The dark night of tribulation is coming for them, when the mighty One will do the work of separating among His people. "His fan is in His hand." In that coming night the believing remnant will seek, like Ruth, the place at His feet and claim Him as their own redeemer. Critics and unbelievers have often sneered at this scene and suggested evil motives. They do the same with other portions of the Word of God. Only an evil mind can read evil into this beautiful scene. It was at midnight when Boaz became conscious of her presence and asked, "Who art thou?" She answered, "I am Ruth." She owns all she is and prays that he may cover her, "for thou art a redeemer." Notice the steps. His question—her answer and prayer because she believed in him as the kinsman redeemer.

She tarried there during the night. "And she lay at his feet till the morning." Then she left not empty handed!

CHAPTER IV

The Redemption and Marriage.

1. The Other Kinsman. Verses 1-5.
2. His Refusal. Verses 6-8.
3. Boaz's Redemption. Verses 9-10.
4. The Marriage. Verses 11-13.

5. Naomi's Happiness. Verses 14-17.
6. The Ancestry of David. Verses 18-22.

And now the other redeemer, who cannot redeem, appears. Boaz sits in the gate and hails the one whom he knew as he passeth by. He calls him not by name but said, "Ho, such a one! turn aside, and sit down here." If Boaz had not called him he would surely have passed by. Then ten men also sit down. The case is stated and the other redeemer is willing to redeem the land. But when he hears that he also must take Ruth the Moabitess, he declares his powerlessness to do it. "I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance. Redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem it." Whom does this unnamed redeemer represent, who can redeem the land, but can do nothing for the poor stranger, the Moabitess? This powerless redeemer is the law. Ten witnesses are there confirming his inability to do it. These represent the ten commandments. The curse of the law rested upon the Moabitess for it is written, "An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord, even to the tenth generation forever." (Deut. xxiii:3.) Therefore the law could not bring in Ruth, but only keep her out. Her case is indeed hopeless from the point of the law. Grace alone can help her. And this grace is beautifully seen in Boaz. He acquires both the land and Ruth, the Moabitess. "And Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife." It is a blessed type of Him who has paid the redemption price for the land and the people. The great day is coming after He had the fan in His hand, at the time of the harvest, when He will redeem both by His gracious power. Then all the blessings will follow—which are but faintly seen in Ruth's union with Boaz. "For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. Fear not, thou shalt not be ashamed; neither be thou confounded: for thou shalt not be put to shame. For thou shalt forget the shame of

thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall He be called." (Is. liv:3-5.) "Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land be any more termed Desolate. But thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah, and thy land Beulah; for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married." (Is. lxii:4.)

The conclusion of this precious little book are the generations of Pharez ending with David. Ruth became the great-grandmother of David.

FIRST SAMUEL

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The Books of Samuel

Introduction

The two Books of Samuel and the two Books of Kings bear in the Greek Version of the Old Testament (the Septuagint) the name First, Second, Third, and Fourth Books of Kingdoms. In the Latin Version, known as the Vulgate, they are called the Books of Kings. In Hebrew manuscripts and the earlier printed editions of the Hebrew text, both of the Books of Samuel appear as one; the same is true of the Book of Kings. It must also be remembered that in the Hebrew Bible, the Books of Samuel belong to that section which Jewish authorities have named "The Former Prophets." The Books of Samuel are, therefore, classed by the Jews with the writings of the Prophets.

THE AUTHORSHIP

The books bear the name of Samuel. This, however, does not mean that Samuel is the author of these books. That would be impossible, inasmuch as the greater part of them contains events which transpired after the death of Samuel. The only hint in Scripture about the authorship of these two books is found in 1 Chronicles xxix:29: "Now the acts of David the King, first and last, behold, they are written in the Book of Samuel the Seer, and in the Book of Nathan the Prophet, and in the Book of Gad the Seer." Ancient tradition among the Jews assigns to Samuel the authorship of the first twenty-four chapters of the first Book of Samuel. These chapters contain what may be termed the life of Samuel up to the time of his death. The twenty-fifth chapter begins with the record of his death. It is reasonable that Samuel wrote these opening chapters of the First Book which bears his name. That Samuel did write is fully established by chapter x:25: "Then Samuel told the people the manner of the Kingdom, and wrote it in a book and laid it up before the Lord." The same Jewish tradition credits Nathan the Prophet and Gad the Seer with having written the remainder of the two books. The passage in the First Book of Chronicles seems to support this view. Evidently Samuel began to write these books, which, for this reason, were called by his name. Modern Criticism rejects this view and claims that the Books of Samuel could not be the work of men who lived during the reign of Saul and David. We

do not give their speculative theories and conflicting opinions, which are of no value whatever in the spiritual study of the text. The best scholars believe that these books belong to a very early period, and that the critical view of a compilation of certain documents and fragments, immediately before the Exile, cannot be sustained. "The minute sketches and vivid touches with which these books abound prove that their author speaks what he knows and testifies what he has seen." * Some of the more important objections Higher Criticism has raised against the early date of the Books of Samuel and the alleged discrepancies we shall point out and answer in our annotations.

THE CONTINUATION OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY

These books contain the continuation of the history of the people Israel. The opening chapters cover the period of the Philistine oppression, during which Samson began to deliver Israel out of the hands of the Philistine. (Judges xiii:5.) As stated in our introduction to the Book of Judges, Samuel's first operations fall into the same time when Samson was acting as judge. Samuel assumed the office of Judge after the death of Samson. In the beginning of the Philistine oppression these two boys were born, both devoted to the Nazariteship and both to a definite work. There is, however, a difference between the two, as Edersheim puts it: "Samuel was God-granted, Samson God-sent; Samuel was God-dedicated, Samson was God-demanded. The work of Samson ended in self-indulgence, failure and death; that of Samuel opened up into the royalty of David."

The final statement with which the Book of Judges closes is the following: "In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes." This shows that Israel was looking forward towards having a king; the need of a king was recognized, for the government by Judges had wrought no deliverance for the people. The ruin into which Israel had fallen, besides being described in the closing chapters of Judges, is also seen in the opening chapters of Samuel. The priesthood is corrupted. Eli is old and weak; his sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were wicked men. The Philistines smite them again. Then they used the ark of the covenant to overcome the foe; but instead there is more defeat. The ark of God is captured by the Philistines and taken to Ashdod. After the return of the ark Samuel called the people to repentance. "Then the children of Israel put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the Lord." (1 Sam. vii:4.) The result was victory over the Philistines. Samuel then judged Israel; he also made his sons judges. Like Eli's sons, they were ungodly. "They turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment." (1 Sam. viii:3.) It was at that

* John Eadie.

time that the elders of Israel made their demand. "Behold thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways, now make us a king to judge us like all nations." (1 Sam. viii:5.) With this the crisis is reached. A king is demanded and the Lord grants their request. They had rejected Him as king over them.

The two institutions which we find now definitely introduced among Israel are the Prophetic Order and the Monarchy. Samuel heads the order of the prophets and is also chosen to crown the first two kings. That the kingly office in the midst of Israel had been anticipated is learned from Deut. xvii:14-15. "When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shall dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me. Thou shalt in any wise set him a king over thee, whom the Lord thy God shall choose; one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee; thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, who is not thy brother." Thus the demand was anticipated and provision made for it in the Law.

FORESHADOWING THE TRUE KING AND HIS KINGDOM

Israel had to have a monarchy established in her midst to foreshadow the true King and His Kingdom. That true King of Israel, the promised One, and His dominion had already been mentioned by Balaam. "A sceptre shall rise out of Israel"—"Out of Jacob shall come He that shall have dominion." (Numbers xxiv: 17-19.) Hannah in her inspired outburst of praise and her prophetic vision beheld that true king. "He shall give strength unto his King and exalt the horn of his Anointed." (1 Sam. ii:10.) It is Israel's true King, the Anointed, the Christ, she beheld.

Saul, the first king, is the people's choice and ends in complete failure. Then David comes upon the scene; he is God's choice; the king after His own heart. But he also fails. However, he is a type of Him who is both David's Lord and David's son, the root and offspring of David, our Lord Jesus Christ, the true King of Israel. David and Solomon are faint shadows of the true King and His work both in judgment and in the Kingdom of peace. The historical records in the Books of Samuel are especially rich in typical and dispensational lessons and teach many spiritual truths. We hope to point out many of them as we follow the text in the annotations.

The Division of First Samuel

Inasmuch as the first Book of Samuel contains the record of Samuel's labors and the anointing of the two first Kings of Israel, Saul and David, Saul's reign and David's exile, we divide the Book into three sections. In the first section we find the birth, childhood and judgeship of Samuel; in the second, the anointing and coronation of Israel's first King, Saul, his reign and rejection. In the third section David, his anointing and exile, are before us. We give these sections and subdivisions as we shall follow them in our analysis and annotations.

I. **SAMUEL THE PROPHET AND JUDGE.** Chapter i-viii:3.

1. **The Birth and Childhood of Samuel.** Chapter i.
2. **Hannah's Prophetic Song.** Chapter ii:1-10.
3. **The Failure of Eli and His Sons.** Chapter ii:12-36.
4. **Samuel's Call and Prophetic Ministry.** Chapter iii.
5. **The Judgment of Eli and his Sons. Ichabod.** Chapter iv.
6. **The Ark in the hands of Philistines and Its Return.** Chapter v-vii:2.
7. **The Return unto Jehovah and the Deliverance.** Chapter vii:3-14.
8. **Samuel Exercising His Office. His Failure.** Chapter vii:15-viii:3.

II. **KING SAUL. HIS REIGN AND REJECTION.** Chapter viii:4-xv:35.

1. **The King Demanded.** Chapter viii:4-22.
2. **The Story of Saul and His Anointing.** Chapter ix-x:16.
3. **The Open Acclamation of Saul as King.** Chapter x:17-27.
4. **The King's First Victory; the Kingdom Renewed at Gilgal.** Chapter xi.
5. **Samuel's Witness and Warning.** Chapter xii.
6. **The First Failure of Saul and Its Results.** Chapter xiii.
7. **Jonathan's Heroic Deed of Faith.** Chapter xiv.
8. **War with Amalek. Saul's Disobedience and Rejection.** Chapter xv.

III. **DAVID, THE KING AFTER GOD'S HEART. HIS EXILE AND SUFFERING.** Chapter xvi-xxxi.

1. **David Anointed King. The Departure of the Spirit from Saul.** Chapter xvi.
2. **David and Goliath.** Chapter xvii.
3. **Jonathan and David. Saul's Jealousy.** Chapter xviii.
4. **Saul's Renewed Attempt. David's Escape.** Chapter xix.
5. **Jonathan Protects David. Their Separation.** Chapter xx.
6. **David's Varied Experiences.** Chapter xxi-xxvii.
7. **Saul and the Witch at Endor.** Chapter xxviii.
8. **David and Achish. Ziklag Destroyed and Avenged.** Chapter xxix-xxx.
9. **The Death of Saul.** Chapter xxxi.

Analysis and Annotations

I. Samuel the Prophet and Judge

Chapter i-viii:3

1. The Birth and Childhood of Samuel.

CHAPTER I

1. Elkanah and his wives. 1-8.
2. Hannah's prayer and vow. 9-18.
3. The Prayer answered. Samuel born. 19-20.
4. The Child weaned and presented unto the Lord. 21-28.

The descent of Samuel opens the book. The names are of striking significance. Elkanah means "acquired of God." He was the son of Jeroham ("tenderly loved"), the son of Elihu ("my God is He"), the son of Tohu ("prostration"), the son of Zuph ("honeycomb"). They were pious generations from which the great man came. Elkanah had two wives. Hannah ("Grace") the much beloved was barren; Peninnah ("Pearl") had children. The fact that Hannah's name stands first makes it probable that her barren condition led Elkanah to marry a second wife. (See Deut. xxi:15.) Elkanah was an Ephraimite. But from 1 Chronicles vi:20-28 we learn that Samuel and his father were of levitical descent. This has been pointed out as a discrepancy. It is however not at all inconsistent with the statement that Samuel's father was of Ephraim. He was one of those Levites to whom cities were assigned in the portion given to the tribe of Ephraim. (Josh. xxi:20.)

Each year Elkanah went to Shiloh to sacrifice unto the

Lord of hosts. It is noteworthy that the name of God as "Lord of Hosts" (Jehovah Zebaoth) appears here for the first time in the Bible.* It is the name of God as the Lord of power, the Lord of all the hosts of heaven and earth. That it is used the first time in the Book which reveals the Kingdom is especially appropriate.

Hannah in her visits to Shiloh presents a sorrowful picture. She is beloved and receives a double portion from Elkanah, while Peninnah, her adversary, provoked her on account of her childless condition, so that she wept and did not eat at the feast. Then she arose from the sacrificial feast which she had not tasted and sought the presence of the Lord. There she wept and vowed a vow that if the Lord of hosts would grant her a man-child she would give him back to the Lord and he should be a Nazarite. She cast herself upon the Lord and laid hold on Him. Samuel therefore was the child of prayer, asked of the Lord; his whole life afterwards manifests the spirit of prayer and dependence.

Then Eli the priest is mentioned for the first time. He was astonished seeing her thus engaged in silent prayer and accused her of drunkenness. His astonishment and accusation is a witness to the sad state of Israel. Evidently few ever sought the presence of the Lord, and his reproof makes it evident that it was not an uncommon thing that drunkenness prevailed during the feasts at Shiloh.

Hannah's prayer was answered. The son is born and was called Samuel, which means "heard of God." Little did she know of the mighty work her son was called to do; her prayer was answered far beyond her thought. She did not go up again to Shiloh till the child was weaned. Then she went up to fulfill her vow and presented him unto the Lord. Before Samuel could begin to serve the Lord he had to be weaned. "As a weaned child no longer cries, frets, and longs for the breast, but lies still and is content, be-

* It is found 281 times in the Bible. It is not found in the Pentateuch; it occurs some 80 times in Jeremiah and 50 times in Zechariah.

cause it is with its mother, so the soul must be weaned from all discontented thoughts, from all fretful desires of earthly good, waiting in stillness upon God, finding its satisfaction in His presence, resting peacefully in His arms." * He began to minister at once unto the Lord before Eli the priest. (Chapter ii:11.) He was brought up in the sanctuary and became that solid, earnest, prayerful man of God. It is the weaning and the sanctuary every servant of Christ still needs. And Hannah had given back to the Lord what He so graciously had bestowed upon her. This should be the case with all our prayer-answers.

2. Hannah's Prophetic Song.

CHAPTER II:1-10

1. The Praise of Jehovah—God. 1-3.
2. Jehovah's Power and Grace in Deliverance. 4-8.
3. The Prophetic Outlook. 9-10.

Hannah's heart filled with the Holy Spirit overflows with a marvellous utterance. Higher criticism claims "that this beautiful sacred lyric could not have been sung by Hannah in the circumstances as described. The words of verse 5 alone approach her situation, and doubtless led to the insertion of the psalm in its present context." They also say "that the Virgin's song (Luke i:46-55) is largely modelled on the song of Hannah." † Such statements deny inspiration. Hannah's and Mary's song are so much alike because the same Spirit spoke through both. Why should it be thought impossible for pious Hannah to give forth such sublime and far reaching words which stand so closely related to all subsequent prophecy, if we believe that the Holy Spirit inspired her as He did Isaiah and other prophets?

As every other song given by the Spirit of God, so her song begins with extolling the Lord, glorifying His name.

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* Perowne on the Psalms.
† Prof. A. R. S. Kennedy.

The first four stanzas give her own experience. She knows Jehovah and rejoices in His salvation. Especially beautiful are the utterances the Spirit of God makes through her in describing Jehovah's power and grace in deliverance. We must think here first of all of our Lord Jesus Christ. He went down into the dust of death and was raised from the dead. He was brought down to the grave and brought up; He became poor and is made rich; He was made low and is lifted up. (Verse 6-7.) And therefore He reaches down to our misery and raiseth the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the beggar from the dunghill to set them among princes to inherit the throne of glory. What a glimpse she, whose name means "Grace," had of grace which stoops so low and lifts so high! Her words came nearest in the Old Testament to the Gospel of Grace as revealed in the New. With the middle of the eighth verse she speaks of the future. The day of the Lord with its judgment bursts into view. The feet of His Saints will be kept; the wicked will be in darkness; the adversaries broken to pieces. Then heaven is no longer silent. The Lord judges. The King, Israel's true and once rejected King, our Lord Jesus Christ, will be exalted. In the beginning of the Books of Kingdoms heaven's true King is seen in prophetic vision.

The ministering child Samuel before the Lord is a most beautiful and sweet picture. Faithfully his little hands did whatever they could do, and Jehovah was well pleased with it.

3. The Failure of Eli and His Sons.

CHAPTER II:12-36

1. The wicked sons of Eli. 12-17.
2. Samuel before Jehovah; Hannah blessed. 18-21.
3. The empty warning of Eli. 22-26.
4. Judgment announced. 27-36.

The corruption of the sons of aged Eli is next exposed. They were sons of Belial; they knew not Jehovah, and yet they ministered in the outward things of the sanctuary.

It could result only in the worst corruption. They handled holy things and were wicked in heart and life. It has been well said "a holiness that is but external is the worst unholiness." It is so to-day in Christendom. Men who know not Jehovah, who are not serving the Lord but themselves and are thus under the control of Satan, the god of this age, minister in the things of God. It results in all kinds of departures and corruption. It is the curse of Christendom. "The sin of the young men was very great before the Lord, for the men despised the offering of Jehovah." Beholding such wicked conduct in the priests men became disgusted with all religious performances and the truth they foreshadowed. They turned away from the offering of Jehovah. It is so still. An unholy, selfish ministry is the greatest stumbling block to the great mass of the people.

And then the contrast! The child Samuel in his little ministry is mentioned once more. What a charming picture he must have been in his little ephod and the little robe furnished by his loving mother! Upon him a mere child, so innocent and simple, the white linen robe had been bestowed. Everything else in Shiloh was corrupted.

Eli makes an attempt to warn his sons of their immoral and wicked conduct. His weak effort but reveals the state of his own soul. The law demanded as a penalty the death of the offenders. The lack of zeal in Eli's remonstrance made no impression upon his wicked sons. Then an unnamed man of God came to Eli and carried to him the message of judgment. Hophni and Phinehas are to die both in one day. Then there is the promise of the raising up of a faithful priest. Such a priest was Zadok, but the promise finds its ultimate fulfillment in Him who is the King-Priest, our Lord Jesus Christ.

4. Samuel's Call and Prophetic Ministry.

CHAPTER III

1. Samuel's Call. 1-9.
2. The Message from Jehovah. 10-18.
3. Samuel the Prophet. 19-21.

After the priesthood had so completely failed and divine judgment had been pronounced, Samuel receives his call to the prophetic office. He continued his ministrations as a Levite during the time that the Word of the Lord was precious (literal: rare); there was no vision. Up to this time Samuel had not known the Lord nor had the Word of the Lord been revealed to him. (Verse 7.) It must have been near the hour of dawn, for the tabernacle lamp was not yet gone out, when the voice of Jehovah called Samuel by name. He knew him, as He knows all His own by name. Three times the voice called and three times he ran unto Eli. Then Eli understood that Jehovah called the child and he instructed him to answer at the next call—"Speak, Jehovah, for thy servant heareth." Jehovah then appeared and stood and called again. Samuel in answering omits the word "Jehovah" Eli had told him to use. He may have omitted the name Jehovah out of reverential fear. He hears thus from Jehovah's lips the message of doom for Eli and his house, which he faithfully transmitted to Eli in the morning. He kept nothing back and Eli bowed to it in resignation; however, he did not repent. "By the faithful discharge of a commission so painful, and involving such self-denial and courage, Samuel had stood the first test of his fitness for the prophetic office. Henceforth "the Word of the Lord" was permanently with him. Not merely by isolated commissions, but in the discharge of a regular office, Samuel acted as Prophet in Israel. A new period in the history of the Kingdom of God had commenced, and all Israel, from Dan to Beer-sheba, knew that there was now a new link between them and their God, a

living centre of guidance and fellowship, and a bond of union for all who were truly the Israel of God.'' *

5. The Judgment of Eli and His Sons. Ichabod.

CHAPTER IV

1. The fulfilled prediction. The death of Eli's sons. 1-11.
2. The death of Eli. 12-18.
3. Ichabod. 19-22.

Israel then renewed the conflict with the Philistines and suffered defeat. It seems that they acted in self-confidence, and when the battle was lost they readily acknowledged the hand of the Lord in the disaster: ''Wherefore has the Lord smitten us to-day before the Philistines?'' But there was no self-judgment, no repentance, no crying unto the Lord. The ark of the covenant of the Lord is brought out of Shiloh. They trust in the ark instead of Jehovah; they expect salvation from the ark of gold and wood: ''it may save us out of the hand of our enemies.'' Alas! ''the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.'' (Verse 4.) They forgot Jehovah whom they had offended and insulted. How could He bless and deliver His people when such sons of Belial were associated with the sanctuary? A worse defeat followed. Thirty thousand Israelites fell, among them the sons of Eli. The Philistines † first terrified by the presence of the ark gain a great victory and capture the ark.

The tidings of the awful disaster reach Eli, ninety-eight years old and totally blind. When he heard that the ark of God was taken, he fell backward, broke his neck and died. Significant is the final paragraph of this chapter. The wife

* Edersheim, Bible History.

† On the words "these are the gods that smote the Egyptians with every plague in the wilderness" Wellhausen, the well known critic, remarks: "Either an excusable inaccuracy, or a copyist's slip." He meant that the Egyptians were not smitten in the wilderness, but in their own land. However, Wellhausen did not see that the Philistines said this. They expressed their inaccurate knowledge of what had happened and Samuel reports it as if it was spoken by the Philistines.

of Phinehas in child-birth also hears of the capture of the ark and the death of Eli, her father-in-law, the death of her husband and his brother. Dying, she named her baby son "Ichabod," which means "no glory." The glory had departed from Israel. Israel had indeed brought forth, by her departure from God, the condition of "Ichabod." The ark as the glory of God's manifest presence among His people was gone. "He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men; and delivered his strength into captivity, and His glory into the enemy's hand." (Ps. lxxviii:60-6.) In a higher sense the word "Ichabod" is written over that which professes to be the church, but which has departed from the Truth. The power and the manifest presence of Jehovah is lost. And many individual Christians have drifted into the same conditions by their sinful and worldly ways.

6. The Ark in the Hands of the Philistines and Its Return.

Chapter v-vii:2.

CHAPTER V

1. The Ark in the house of Dagon. 1-5.
2. The Philistines smitten by Jehovah. 6-12.

The ark was brought to Ashdod, the leading city of the Philistines, and set up in the temple dedicated to Dagon, the chief god of the people. It was half fish and half man, the symbol of fertility. Before this idol the ark was set up. In their blindness they imagined that Dagon had conquered the God of Israel. The next morning they found Dagon fallen with his face to the earth before the Ark. It was the Lord who did it and not an accident. The next morning the whole idol-image, except the fish-part, is fallen upon the ground. "The head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands lay cut off upon the threshold." The God of Israel demonstrated His power over the gods of the Philistines, yet they continued to reverence even the thres-

hold where the fragments of their idol had lain. Such is the darkness of fallen man.

A severer visitation came upon the Philistines; they were smitten with malignant boils. At the same time a plague of field mice destroyed the fields and the harvest. (Chapter vi:4, 11, 18.) It reminds us of the plagues of Egypt. Yet the Philistines did not repent of their sins, but carried the ark of God about, but wherever it was carried the same punishment came upon the people. Yet there was no repentance from the side of the Philistines. All this becomes still more interesting if we consider what the Philistines as the enemies of the people of God represent.* The world is to experience the judgments and plagues of God in a future day foreshadowed in these plagues which came upon the land of the Philistines; and there will be no turning to God. In the Book of Revelation, where these final judgments upon a wicked world and an apostate world-church are described, we hear not a word of repentance. The answer God receives will be blasphemy of His name. "And they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and sores, and repented not of their evil deeds." (Rev. xvi:11.)

CHAPTER VI-VII:2

1. The Counsel of the Philistines. 1-9.
2. The Ark at Beth-shemesh. 10-20.
3. The Ark at Kirjath-jearim. 21-vii:2.

The ark had remained among the Philistines seven months. For them they were months of suffering and deadly destruction. Now they plot to get rid of the ark and of Him whose hand rested so heavily in judgment upon them. The advice of the heathen priests and diviners is that the ark should be sent away with votive offerings of gold, representing that which had plagued them. This was a heathen custom; which has also been adopted and is practiced by Roman Catholicism, the great Philistine

* See Annotations on "Judges."

system of Christendom. In Romish churches, especially at shrines, one can find hundreds of votive offerings to God by those who are suffering affliction to appease the wrath of God. It is heathenish and denies Him who shed His blood for our redemption. And as these Philistine priests had some knowledge of God's judgment upon Egypt they added to their counsel a warning reminding them of Pharaoh and Egypt. Their unbelief and superstition is manifested by the way they returned the ark. But the power of the Creator is seen in the incident.

"In result it is proved conclusively that Jehovah is the God of Creation, supreme above all the natural instincts: the kine, though unaccustomed to a yoke, take the cart with its sacred burden directly away from where their calves are shut up, even while lowing after them, and take the straight road to Bethshemesh, a priestly city near the Israelite border. There, at the border, they stop, still under the eyes of the Philistine lords, at a great stone upon which the Levites place the ark, and where the kine are offered up a burnt-offering to Jehovah.

"Thus the Philistines have Jehovah's sovereignty demonstrated to them in the precise terms which they have themselves chosen,—the goodness of God thus meeting them with what should have turned them from idolatry forever and brought them to His feet. But they go back, after all, to worship instead the humbled Dagon." *

The ark reaches Beth-shemesh ("house of the Sun") the nearest point across the border. It is welcomed with much rejoicing, but they forgot the holiness of God and looked into the ark, and the people of Beth-shemesh were smitten. As Beth-shemesh was only a small town it is generally taken that the number of the slain as given in verse 19 was changed by the mistake of a copyist. Various readings give smaller numbers; but that is immaterial.

The ark is removed from Beth-shemesh to Kirjath-jearim, "the city of the woods." It was an humble place where the ark abode for twenty years. It was brought into the

* Numerical Bible.

house of Abinadab; his son Eleazar ("my God is help") was set aside to keep it. David found it there. (Psalm cxxxii:6.) The ark never returned to Shiloh again.

7. The Return Unto Jehovah and the Deliverance.

CHAPTER VII:3-14

1. Samuel's Message and the Response of the People. 3-4.
2. Gathered at Mizpah. 5-6.
3. The Deliverance. 7-14.

Samuel now is seen beginning his great national ministry. The message he brings is the message of repentance and the assurance of faith. In simple words he addressed the people, who no doubt were prepared for it by their long period of humiliation. He demands that their true return to the Lord must be practical; the strange gods and Ashtaroth must be put away. If they serve the Lord only deliverance out of the hands of the Philistines would come. The message was at once obeyed. Every true return to the Lord must manifest itself in the same way. True repentance without self-judgment and self-surrender is impossible. The earnest appeal and whole-hearted response by the people led to the great gathering at Mizpah ("the watchtower"). It was a day of humiliation and prayer. Samuel said "I will pray the Lord for you." He was the child of prayer and the man of prayer. (Chapter viii: 6; xii:19; 23.) "Samuel among them that call upon His name; they called upon the Lord and He answered them." (Ps. xcix:6.) There was confession of sin and they drew water, and poured it out before Jehovah. It was a symbolical act showing the undone and helpless condition of Israel. "We must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground." (2 Sam. xiv:14.) When the Philistines came up against them they were afraid and acknowledged prayer as their only refuge and help. "Cease not" they appealed to Samuel "to cry for us unto the Lord our God." And afterwards he offered a whole burnt offering unto the Lord.

This offering represents Christ. Then Samuel cried unto the Lord and the Lord answered him. The elements of a true return unto the Lord and a true revival among God's people are found in this great national movement. While Samuel offered the burnt-offering and interceded for Israel the Philistines drew near. Then came the interference from the Lord. It was a supernatural thundering which discomfited the Philistines, and they were smitten. Israel gains a great victory. They pursue the enemy to Beth-car ("house of the lamb"). Between Mizpah and Shen the stone called by Samuel "Ebenezer" is put up as a memorial. Ebenezer means "stone of help." "Helped—but only 'hitherto'! For all Jehovah's help is only 'hitherto'—from day to day, and from place to place—not unconditionally, nor wholly, nor once for all, irrespective of our bearing." *

8. Samuel Exercising His Office. His Failure.

CHAPTER VII:15-VIII:3

1. Samuel the Prophet-Judge. 15-17.
2. His Failure. viii:1-3.

Samuel's activity as the great Prophet-Judge is now seen. He had a blessed circuit of ministry, which has its spiritual lessons for us. He first visited Bethel ("the house of God"). Judgment must begin there. When Jacob was obedient to the divine call "Arise and go up unto Bethel" he buried the strange gods, the household gods under the oak of Shechem. So the evil things must be put away. Then came Gilgal (rolling). There the reproach of Egypt was rolled away. (Joshua V.) This is what we need, to be freed from the world, dead to it and the world dead to us. Mizpah ("watch tower") was his third station. This is our constant need to be on our guard and watch against the foe, as well as look upward and forward from Mizpah to that blessed home where He is and which we shall surely

* Edersheim: Bible History.

share with Him. This is represented in Ramah ("Heights") where Samuel had his home. But there is failure. Samuel makes the mistake in making his sons judges. Because he was a Judge and a Prophet and had success in it, his sons are to follow him in the same capacity. God does not work by succession, nor does He transmit gift and power from father to son. The so-called "Apostolic succession" and traditional authority is an invention and one of the greatest factors in the corruption of the Christianity. The Lord alone can call to service and give gifts for the ministry. Joel and Abiah were judges in Beersheba, but walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and prevented judgment. And this opened the way for the introduction of the monarchy in Israel.

II. King Saul. His Reign and Rejection

Chapter viii:4; xv:35

1. The King Demanded.

CHAPTER VIII:4-22

1. The King demanded. 4-9.
2. The Rights of the King. 10-22.

The kingly government is now to be established through the deliberate and untheocratic self-determination of the people. Jehovah was their invisible King, and Him they rejected by requesting a King like all the nations. The motives for the demand of a King are three: 1. The old age of Samuel and the unfitness of his sons. 2. The desire to be upon the same footing with other nations. 3. To have a leader and fight their battles. (Verse 20.)* Samuel was displeased by the request, but the man of prayer turned to the Lord and received from Him the needed direction. The Lord comforts the heart of His servant "for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." As they did to Jehovah, so the Lord told His servant, do they also unto thee. The servant is identified with His Master. It reminds us of the words of our Lord: "If they have persecuted Me, they will persecute you also." We are

* The state or political organization reaches its highest development when royalty is introduced. The King of Israel is not, however, intended to be an autocratic but a theocratic king; the prophet and the priest, in their official capacity, did not occupy a subordinate, but a co-ordinate rank. As men and as citizens, they were under an obligation, like all other subjects, to obey the king; but with respect to their prophetic and priestly offices, they were dependent on God alone, and by no means on the king."—Sacred History by Kurtz.

called to share His reproach. And they were to have a King according to their own choice. Later the Lord reminded Israel through Hosea of this event. "I will be thy King; where is any other that may serve thee in all thy cities? and thy judges of whom thou saidst, give me a king and princes? I gave thee a King in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath." (Hos. xiii:10-11.) Then Samuel describes the manner, literally the rights, of the King. Military service, harsh and compulsory, forced labour and other evils are spread before them. Yet they refused to hearken and the Lord said again: "Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king."

2. The Story of Saul and His Anointing.

CHAPTER IX-X:16

1. Saul the son of Kish and the lost asses. 1-10.
2. Samuel and Saul. 11-24.
3. Saul anointed King. 25-x:16.

And now the Lord gives them a King according to their choice. "He should possess all the natural attractions and marital qualities which the people could desire in their king; he should reflect their religious standpoint at their best; but he should also represent their national failings and the inmost defects of their religious life; that of combining zeal for the religion of Jehovah, and outward conformity to it, with utter want of real heart submission to the Lord, and of true devotedness to Him."* They obtained exactly what they wanted. God's choice for them would have been a different character, one who seeks Him and is in subjection to Him, as we shall find in the king after God's heart, King David. But now He gives to the people what they had asked for.

Saul means "asked." The genealogy of Saul is given; the five names in their original meaning suggest the pride and self-glorification of the natural man. Saul is described

* Edersheim.

as an ideal man, "a young man" (literal: "in the prime of manhood") and goodly; and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he; from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people. Saul, ignorant of the divine purpose, sets out to seek the lost she-asses of his father. Little did he know how the search would end and that he would soon become the head of the nation, which had gone more astray than the lost asses. (Is. i:3.) A small matter it was going forth to look for animals which had strayed away; but the guiding hand of Jehovah was there. The search is futile. The servant then suggests a visit to the man of God, none other than Samuel. Saul seems to have no knowledge of Samuel. He is willing enough to seek the man for council but he is troubled about the present for the man of God. It shows the tendency of the natural man to give in order to get from God. The servant has the fourth part of a shekel of silver which he offers to give to the man of God. Verse 9, containing a parenthetical statement, is not a gloss by a later hand, as the critical school maintains. The difference between seer and prophet is an interesting one. A prophet is one who speaks for God being moved by God; he is the mouthpiece of the Lord. The term seer suggests the knowledge the prophet had. The people were more concerned about the seer than the prophet. Thus Saul shows the state of his heart. He does not seek God, nor the prophet as the man and mouthpiece of God; only the seer.

Then Samuel and Saul meet for the first time. First Saul and the servant meet maidens going out to draw water, and they directed them to the heights where a sacrificial feast was to be held. And the Lord had spoken into Samuel's ear the day before that the man of Benjamin would come. All had been ordered by the Lord and Samuel, knowing the expected one would come had reserved the shoulder of the peace offering * for him. (Verse 23-24.) What the Lord had said to Samuel concerning Saul reveals His gracious purpose of love towards Saul. Though he was

* See Annotations in Leviticus.

the people's choice yet the Lord was willing to make him much more, even the saviour of this people Israel. (Verse 16.) Samuel tells Saul that the asses were found, so that he was relieved of the anxiety. And when Samuel acquaints him that all Israel desires him, he speaks of his own littleness. (Verse 21.) It reminds us of that other Saul of the tribe of Benjamin, the Apostle Paul.* However Saul, the son of Kish, knew nothing of real self-judgment. It was rather the language of surprise than the expression of a deep, heartfelt humility. Then we see them in communion, and afterwards Samuel anoints him with the holy anointing oil and kissed him. The anointing is the symbol of power conferred upon him and also implies dependence upon the Holy Spirit, typified by the oil. The kiss was given in token of homage. Thus Saul became the first King in Israel. Samuel also gave him three significant signs, which all came to pass. They were given to Saul to assure him of all which had taken place and to teach him certain spiritual lessons. He was assured that God is with Him. (X:7.) The Spirit of God also came upon him and he prophesied.

"By this, as in the case of judges, we are, however, not to understand the abiding and sanctifying Presence of the Holy Ghost dwelling in the heart as His temple. The Holy Ghost was peculiarly "the gift of the Father" and "of the Son," and only granted to the Church in connection with and after the Resurrection of our Blessed Lord. Under the Old Testament, only the manifold influences of the Spirit were experienced, not His indwelling as the Paraclete. This appears not only from the history of those so influenced, and from the character of that influence, but even from the language in which it is described. Thus we read that the Spirit of Elohim "seized upon" Saul, suddenly and mightily laid hold on him,—the same expression being used in Judg. xiv:6, 19; xv:14; 1 Sam. xvi:13; xviii:10."

* Paul means, Little.

3. The Open Acclamation of Saul as King.

CHAPTER X:17-27

1. The Lot at Mizpah. 17-21.
2. The Acclamation of the King. 22-27.

Samuel called once more a national gathering at Mizpah. The lot is now to be cast. But before this is done the Lord through Samuel reminds them once more of their serious mistake: "And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto Him, Nay but set a King over us." They had not heeded this warning before and now they are to receive what they had asked in their self-will. The lot was therefore but an outward, empty ceremony. It fell on Saul, the son of Kish. He could not be found. Why did he hide? Some say it was humility and modesty. It was not that, but rather fear of the responsibility he was now to assume. And that revealed lack of confidence in God of whose power he had received such evidences. All foreshadows the coming failure of the people's king. When he is presented before the people it was seen that he towered above them all. When Samuel introduced him, "See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen," there was a wave of fleshly enthusiasm. And all the people shouted and said, God save the King.* Now they had a king like the other nations, a king who reflected their own carnal, unspiritual condition. How his heart must have been lifted up with pride even then! Once more Samuel tells them the manner of the kingdom; it was undoubtedly a restatement of Deut. xvii:14-20. And Saul did not assume leadership at once. He went home to Gibeah. A faithful company whom God had touched accompanied the king, while the sons of Belial despised him and brought no present. There was opposition to him. He showed the wisdom of the natural man by holding his peace. He was as a deaf man.

* Literal: Live the King!

4. The King's First Victory; the Renewal of the Kingdom at Gilgal.

CHAPTER XI

1. The Victory over Ammon. 1-11.
2. The Kingdom Renewed. 12-15.

Nahash the Ammonite encamped against Jabesh-Gilead. Nahash means "the Serpent." This invasion took place before Saul had been made king. From chapter xii:12 we learn that it really was the occasion why Israel demanded a king. In despair the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead offered to make a covenant with this old foe of Israel, whom Jephtah had so successfully fought. Ammon represents typically the enemy of God's people characterized by evil doctrines and perversions of the truth of God. How often compromise is made with the most subtle errors which emanate from Nahash, the Serpent! But he makes his condition, their right eyes are to be plucked out. We speak of the eye of faith, and typically we may apply it in this way. All errors and false doctrines blind the eyes of faith and rob God's people of their true vision.

Then Saul acts for the first time. However his actions are characteristic of his spiritual condition. We read nothing of prayer; he did not seek the presence of the Lord. It is true, the Spirit of God came upon him, but that does not mean that he was right with God. The Spirit of God came also upon Belaam to prophesy. Even so the Spirit came upon King Saul with external power in the same sense as He came upon the Judges. The anger which he manifested, the methods he employed to stir up the people, the threat he makes and his leaning on Samuel for authority (verse 7) all show again the lack of true faith. He is but the man in the flesh who knows not the Lord.

At Gilgal the kingdom is renewed. The people are united and suggest the killing of the sons of Belial mentioned in the previous chapter. Saul forbids it and acknowledges that the Lord had wrought salvation that day. But there

is no real outburst of praise. They were at Gilgal, the place which typifies death to the flesh. Here Saul is made king before the Lord. But while Saul and the people rejoiced nothing is said of Samuel's joy. The man of God looked deeper, for he knew that all was only skin deep and that the Lord, whom they had rejected from being king over them, could not be pleased with their outward joy.

5. Samuel's Witness and Warning.

CHAPTER XII

1. His Witness to his own Integrity. 1-5.
2. His Warning. 6-15.
3. Heaven's Answer. 16-19.
4. His Words of Comfort. 20-25.

What a scene! The man of God, the man of prayer, now advanced in years, stands before them. "I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day." Here was not a Nazarite who had failed like Samson, but one who had lived out his Nazariteship in the fullest sense of the word. What unselfish service he had rendered and how he loved his own people! In all this he is a type of that greatest servant who came in the fulness of time not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many. His witness to his own integrity reminds us also of Paul's words in the Epistle to the Corinthians. (2 Cor. xi:6-9; xii:14-17.) The whole nation acknowledged Samuel's integrity. A brief historical retrospect follows in which Samuel points out their sin of forgetting Jehovah.* Their present condition was like that of their fathers, unbelief and disobedience.

It was the time of the wheat harvest. Samuel prayed for a witness from heaven upon his words. Then it thundered and rained. It never thunders and rains in Palestine at that time of the year (May and June). A guilty fear seized upon them and they requested intercession. This

* Bedan in Verse 11 should be "Barak."

reminds us of that coming harvest, the end of the age. (Matth. xiii:39.) Then Jehovah will thunder in judgment and the repentance of the people of Israel will follow. However true repentance did not take place here when Samuel prayed. Beautiful are his words of comfort. How he manifests the work and character of a true prophet! Here is also the assurance for Israel. "For Jehovah for His great name's sake will not forsake His people, because it hath pleased Jehovah to make you His people." His gifts and calling are without repentance.

6. The First Failure of Saul and Its Results.

CHAPTER XIII

1. The Failure of Saul. 1-9.
2. Samuel's Sentence. 10-14.
3. Israel's Deplorable Condition. 15-23.

Omit the first verse of this chapter as it does not belong into the text. In self-confidence Saul has dismissed the greater part of the people; only 2000 remained with him and 1000 with his son Jonathan. Saul is now passing through a test. Hath he true faith which counts and depends on God? Is he obedient to His word as given by the Prophet? Jonathan appears here for the first time. His name means "the Lord hath given." He is the opposite from his poor father; the son is a man of real faith and zeal for God. In smiting the garrison of the Philistines he manifested that faith. He counted on God and in dependence on Him he acted. And what did Saul do? "And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, let the Hebrews hear." It was not the action of faith but the result of his own proud heart. Significant it is that he avoids the word Israel. The Lord never speaks of "my people the Hebrews," their original, national name; it is always "my people Israel." He leaves out the God of Israel. It all reveals the character of Saul. Then Saul gets the credit of having smitten the garrison of the Philis-

tines, and when they gathered in all their strength the people are paralysed by fear, and instead of advancing in the name of Jehovah they seek the caves, the thickets, the rocks, the high places and the pits. And some of the Hebrews even crossed the Jordan. Saul remains in these demoralized conditions at Gilgal, followed by some of the people trembling. It is all unbelief; like king, like people. They fear the Philistines and distrust Jehovah. And Saul at Gilgal! He might have remembered the captain of the Lord's hosts and sought His presence and help. All shows the chosen king knew not the Lord. Samuel's word to him (chapter x:8) was not forgotten by Saul. He wails, but not long enough. The test is on. The people stay a few days and then begin to scatter. They have no faith; neither has the king. True faith waits on God and trusts in Him. Faith knows that man's extremity is God's opportunity. Saul makes an outward effort to be obedient, while in his soul he knows no subjection to the Lord and to His way. At last the breaking point is reached. He intrudes into the priestly office. The burnt offering, without any meaning under these circumstances, is brought by Saul and immediately after, perhaps before the seven days had fully expired, Samuel appears.

The king's own words reveal once more his character and they are his condemnation. He was tested and the test revealed a heart which did not fear the Lord, had no confidence in Him and is disobedient to His word. And Samuel delivers his message. Sentence is pronounced. Another, a man after the Lord's own heart, is to take his place. And the deplorable condition of Israel! The Philistines speak also of them as Hebrews. Instead of being dependent upon the Lord for everything, they were the slaves of their oppressors, dependent upon them. This is the place into which unbelief can put the people of God.

7. Jonathan's Heroic Deed of Faith.

CHAPTER XIV

1. Jonathan's Victory. 1-23.
2. Saul's adjuration and Jonathan's deed. 24-32.
3. Saul's first altar and unanswered inquiry. 33-37.
4. Jonathan condemned and saved. 38-45.
5. Saul's battle and success. 46-48.
6. Saul's family. 49-52.

Jonathan, one of the most beautiful characters of the Bible, with a kindred spirit, his armour bearer, goes forward to attack once more the outpost of the Philistines. Saul knew nothing of it. The King is surrounded by a small company, among them the relations of Eli. They had an ephod, needed for inquiry from Jehovah, but we do not read of its use. Jonathan and his armour bearer and their conversation are blessed illustrations of true faith. What simplicity it reveals! Jonathan knew the Lord and knew that He loves His people and therefore would overthrow their enemies. He tells the armour bearer "it may be that the Lord will work for us, for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few." And the armour bearer, whose name we do not know, but known to God, answered him: "Do all that is in thine heart; turn thee; behold I am with thee according to thy heart." They were in blessed unity. They cast themselves upon the Lord and let Him decide what they were to do. And the Lord, as He always does, answers to their faith. In spite of the difficulties, the sharp rocks, which they had to ascend,* difficulties which are always connected with true faith, they overcome the foe. The Lord was there, for it was His battle and the earth quaked. But twenty men were slain by the two. A great confusion followed. The multitude melted away as they beat each other, and the Hebrews which had been with the Philistines turned against

* "They climb on hands and knees to the attack; knees as well as hands are a great necessity in climbing spiritual heights."

them. It was the Lord who saved Israel that day. (Verse 23.)

Then Jonathan and his armour bearer were missed. Saul made an attempt in consulting the Lord, which did not succeed. Saul's adjuration was unnecessary and made in self-will. His oath is but the working of the natural man. In his blindness he thinks he can help along the complete defeat of the enemy by his legal injunction. On account of this foolish oath the people were in distress; legalism always puts burdens and distress upon the people of God. His own son Jonathan, ignorant of his father's commandment, takes a little honey on the end of the rod and receives refreshment by it. Honey is the type of natural things and their sweetness. Their use in the right way is not forbidden. Like Jonathan we must touch them only with the end of the rod and take a little. If Jonathan had gone down on his knees and filled himself with all the honey he could eat, it would not have refreshed but incapacitated him for the conflict. Jonathan was revived by the little honey he had taken, while the people fainted. But a worse result of Saul's commandment happened. The famished people ate meat with the blood. Thus Saul's restriction of a lawful thing led to the breaking of a divine commandment.

Saul erects his first altar, for he feels the need; perhaps less than that, he only fears the judgment of God. There is no answer from God when he inquired "Shall I go down after the Philistines?" What follows shows us again the impetuous and stubborn heart of Saul. Self-righteous and self-willed he is ready to slay his own son; the people rescued him from his own hands. What humiliation for King Saul!

8. War with Amalek. Saul's Disobedience and Rejection.

CHAPTER XV

1. The commission to destroy Amalek. 1-9.
2. Saul's Disobedience and Rejection. 10-23.
3. Saul's Confession. 24-31.
4. The Doom of Agag. 32-35.

From verse 48 in the previous chapter we learn that Saul smote the Amalekites. Samuel is sent by Jehovah with a new message to Saul telling him to smite Amalek again and to destroy utterly all that they have. It involves another task for Saul. He had been fully established as King and is therefore called upon to discharge his responsibilities and prove that he is fit for the position which he held. Amalek is the great foe of God's people and typifies, as we have seen in our annotation on Exodus (chapter xvii), the flesh and its lusts. Israel should have war with Amalek from generation to generation, and the remembrance of Amalek was to be completely blotted out. Even so the flesh is always the enemy of the children of God. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh." It is enmity against God. With this enemy Saul was to war and to destroy them utterly. But Saul at heart was nothing but an Amalekite. He gathers his army to do what Jehovah had demanded. The Lord gives Amalek into his hands. Then comes the significant "but."—"But Saul and his people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good and would not utterly destroy them, but everything that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly."

"The lesson is a deeply solemn one, and wider in application than perhaps we would easily allow. If Amalek stand here as elsewhere for the lusts of the flesh, alas, is it not true that we measure our judgment of these often more by our own tastes than by the simple letter of the Word of God? How easy it is to judge the multitude of things, and spare the worst of all, the Agag! And things which

minister to the lusts of the flesh are unhesitatingly allowed, if only they are not what to common estimate would be considered vile. Our judgments, how apt are they to be those of the world at large rather than of God,—in the light of nature rather than of the sanctuary!" *

Then the Lord, who had been the silent witness of all this, told Samuel about it. A night of sorrow and of prayer followed for the man of God. How he must have pleaded with the Lord for unhappy Saul! Samuel and Saul meet. Strange words which came from the lips of disobedient Saul: "Blessed be thou of the Lord! I have performed the commandment of the Lord." It was a falsehood. He then hears the sentence. "When thou wast little in thine own sight thou becamest the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee King over Israel!" And now he had become great in his own sight and little in the sight of the Lord. Solemn are the Prophet's words to him. "Behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the Word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being King." This was the irrevocable sentence of Jehovah. Alas! Saul's confession but reveals his true character once more. He sinned and transgressed against the voice of the Lord, because he feared the people and hearkened to their voice. Such a one was unworthy to be King over the Lord's people. It is a sad spectacle, the unrelenting Samuel and the deposed King. And Samuel deals with Agag in judgment as he deserved it.

The statement "and Samuel saw Saul no more until the days of his death" is taken by critics in connection with chapter xix:24 as an indication of the diversity of the sources from which the Books of Samuel have been derived. But it is incorrect. Samuel did not come to see Saul again, though Saul prophesied before Samuel. However Chapter xxviii:11-19 must be connected with Samuel's final word to Saul in this chapter.

* Numerical Bible.

III. David, the King After God's Heart. His Exile and Suffering

Chapter xvi-xxxi

1. David Anointed King. The Departure of the Spirit from Saul.

CHAPTER XVI

1. David anointed King. 1-13.
2. The Spirit departs from Saul. David with Saul. 14-23.

The King after the people's heart has failed and is set aside, and now Jehovah brings forth His king after His own heart. That King is like Jonathan, a man of faith, is devoted to Jehovah and in perfect subjection unto Him. Furthermore from the tribe of Judah (Judah means "Praise") he is a worshipper through whom the Spirit of God pours forth the sweetest strains of praise and worship. He prospers into a great kingdom and Jehovah makes an oathbound covenant with Him. (2 Sam. vii.) That covenant points us to the true King, who according to the flesh is of the seed of David. Saul could not foreshadow that King. There is absolutely nothing in Saul which could remind us of the King, who is yet to rule over this earth in righteousness. It is different with the life and reign of David. Everywhere we may discover most blessed types of our Lord Jesus Christ, the son of David. Because this King after God's own heart is to give a typical vision of the coming true King, David had to pass through suffering first before he could receive the kingdom and its glory. From now on in this book we shall follow the sufferings of the King after God's heart.

Samuel was interrupted in his mourning for Saul by a new command to fill his horn with oil for the anointing of another King. That King is to be chosen from the sons of Jesse the Bethlehemite. A sacrificial feast is appointed in connection with the approaching anointing of the son of Jesse, and Samuel is obedient and went to Bethlehem. Then he called Jesse and his sons to the feast. Then the seven sons of Jesse pass by, but the chosen one is not among them. Only one was left, the youngest who kept the sheep. He is brought in. Now he was ruddy * and withal of a beautiful countenance and goodly to look upon; and the Lord said, Arise, anoint him, for this is he. David the son of Jesse was anointed and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him. And so David became the Lord's anointed. David means "Beloved"; he is a shepherd, typifying the Beloved One, the good, the great and the chief Shepherd. What a contrast with Saul!

An evil spirit from the Lord began then to trouble Saul after the Spirit of the Lord had departed from him. What a sad spectacle he now presents! When he had been anointed the Spirit also came upon him and he became another man. His pride, self-will, disobedience and stubbornness we have followed, and now the Spirit departs and in judgment upon the deposed King an evil spirit was permitted to come upon Saul. "Evil as well as good has its commission from God,—not its existence, but its liberty to act, and the limits of its action." It was no doubt a case of demon possession. He had rejected the Word of God and was given over into the hands of a demon. Such is also the case in the days of apostasy which are now upon Christendom. They depart from the faith and follow seducing spirits and doctrines of demons. Doctrinal apostasy and the moral evils following such an apostasy is the work of demons. God still permits as an act of judgment that demons possess those who are disobedient and rebel against Him. Then David is called in to sing to the afflicted King and to soothe him. And he loved him greatly

* Ruddy is literally reddish and may refer to auburn hair.

and David became his armour bearer. "And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand; so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him." Here we have a beautiful type of the Lord Jesus Christ. His sweet words, the ministrations of His Spirit refresh the soul and drive out the evil spirit. When the unhappy King had been quieted and the ministry of the young Shepherd-King was no longer needed, he returned to his home and to his shepherd life; to feed his father's sheep. (xvii:15.) *

2. David and Goliath.

CHAPTER XVII

1. Goliath of Gath, the Philistine. 1-11.
2. David's Errand and inquiry. 12-30.
3. David's Offer to fight Goliath. 31-40.
4. David's Victory. 41-54.
5. Saul's Inquiry. 55-58.

Modern critics are practically unanimous in regarding the story of this chapter as unhistorical. One of the leading arguments they advance is the statement found in 2 Sam. xxi:19 that the slayer of Goliath was Elhanan the son of Jair-oregim, a Bethlehemite. But if we consult still another passage we find that Elhanan slew the brother of Goliath. "And Elhanan the son of Jair smote Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite." (1 Chron. xx:5.) It is therefore no discrepancy at all. A closer examination into this matter we cannot undertake here. If the account in 1 Sam. xvii were unhistorical the jealousy of Saul against David would be inexplicable.

* No discrepancy exists between 1 Sam. xvi:19–23 and the question which Saul subsequently asks: "Whose son is this youth?" (xvii: 55-58.) The king had not been previously anxious to become intimately acquainted with the origin and family-connections of one who merely bore his arms and served as his harper; but when the latter is on the point of becoming his son-in-law, it is naturally a matter of interest to him to acquire a more accurate knowledge of the personal history of David."

David, the Lord's anointed, in his great deed, is constituted the deliverer of Israel. The deed of the young shepherd is one of the greatest recorded in the Bible. It was simple trust in the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, which won the overthrow of the boasting Philistine. In typical application the story of David and Goliath is especially rich; we can pass on but a little of it. A prayerful and diligent search will reveal much more. Goliath, the giant, is the type of Satan, the prince of this world, who has the power of death. He also typifies that which is connected with the enemy of God, which is under the leadership of Satan. This is suggested by the number "six." Six is in Bible numerics the number of man in opposition to God. His height was six cubits. He had also six pieces of armour (verses 5-7). The number six is also prominent in another giant, who was slain by Jonathan, the son of Shimeah. He had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot. (2 Sam. xxi:20.) Nebuchadnezzar's image of gold also has the number six connected with it. (Dan. iii:1.) In Revelation we find the number of the beast, that coming man of sin, and his number is 666; it represents the utmost defiance of God, the fullest manifestation of sin. The bold and defiant language Goliath used, the terror he inspired among the people of God, find easy application to Satan and his power.

And David is the type of our Lord Jesus Christ. His father sent David on a mission to his brethren. It reminds us of Joseph who was sent to seek for his lost brethren. Both are types of Him whom the Father sent into the world.* He came to the camp in lowliness and then was misunderstood and wrongly accused by his own brethren. And thus our Lord was treated by His own. We must not overlook the prominence given to the reward which he is to receive who slays Goliath. "The King will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel." Well may we see here a type of the reward of Him who became poor for our

* Jesse means "Jehovah is living."

sake. And David took the stones from the brook, out of the water, the type of death. Then after he struck the giant with the stone, he took Goliath's sword and slew him and cut off his head. Even so our Lord Jesus Christ by death destroyed him that had the power of death, this is, the devil. (Hebr. ii:14.) And now Israel and Judah, the types of the true people of God, can arise and shout for joy and gain a complete victory over the conquered foe. (Verse 52.) And this took place at Ephes-dammim ("the boundary of blood") and the valley of Elah ("the mighty one"). It speaks of the blood and the power, death and resurrection. What evidences we have in these historical events and their typical application of the inspiration of the Bible! And David had said to Goliath that the victory Jehovah would give him should bring about "that all the earth may know there is a God in Israel." All the earth will yet see and know His salvation.

The alleged difficulty of verses 55-58 we have already explained in a foot note at the close of the previous chapter.*

3. Jonathan and David. Saul's Jealousy.

CHAPTER XVIII

1. Jonathan's love for David. 1-4.
2. The Beginning of Saul's Jealousy. 5-16.
3. David's Marriage. 17-30.

A beautiful scene opens this chapter. Jonathan, the man of faith, loves David. He was about 40 years old and David about 17. Jonathan made a covenant with David and loved him as his own soul. He showed also his great devotion by giving to David, his robe, his garments, his sword, his bow and his girdle. Thus he stripped himself of all for David's sake. Such devotion and love should we

* Note objections made by critics to verse 54. They say it is "curious anachronism, since David's future capital was still in the hands of the Jebusites." However, Jerusalem, west of Moriah, had been taken by Judah. The Jebusites only held Jebus, or Zion, south of Moriah. See Judges i:7-8. Higher Criticism abounds in misstatements of the Scriptures.

manifest towards Him, who is greater than David. No doubt Jonathan's devotion was kindled by the deed young David had done in slaying Goliath. And when we think of what our Lord has done for us the devotion to Him increases.

And David the anointed is the obedient servant and conducts himself wisely. The days of suffering and exile are now rapidly approaching. The song of the women, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands," angers the rejected King. Again the demon possesses him because he gave way to his temper. He nourished the feeling of hatred against David. "He eyed David from that day forward." When the evil spirit came upon him he prophesied. This has been hard to understand to some. Several translators have translated "raved"; but that cannot be done, for the word prophesy is the same as in Chapter x:5. Prophesying means to speak by inspiration; it does not always mean the prediction of future events. Now there is besides a divine inspiration, also a satanic inspiration. Certain cults which claim restoration of certain gifts claim inspiration, which has often been traced to the influence of demons. Saul uttered words which were the result of the indwelling evil spirit. Then he attempted twice to kill David with the javelin. This was no doubt an attempt from the side of Satan to do away with him from whose loins the promised seed, the Redeemer, was to come. The Lord shielded David and Saul was afraid of him, because the Lord was with him.

And now David has also gained the love of all Israel and Judah. Saul then offers to make David his son-in-law. Underneath it all was the mad King's plotting to get rid of David and have the Philistines kill him. How blinded Saul had become! The Lord's anointed was in the Lord's own hands and his life was precious in His sight. It has its precious lessons for us likewise.

Merab is promised to him to become his wife, but Achiel receives her instead. (See 2 Sam. xxi:8 and read "Merab" instead of "Michal.") Then he received Michal, who loved

David. We shall meet her again later when she was restored to the King by Abner and later mocked the King of Israel. And Saul, after his scheme failed, became David's enemy continually.

4. Saul's Renewed Attempt. David's Escape.

CHAPTER XIX

1. Saul and Jonathan. 1-7.
2. Saul's new Attempt to Kill David. 8-10.
3. David's Escape. 11-18.
4. Saul's Pursuit and his helplessness. 19-24.

The lost King goes from bad to worse. First he tried to spear David; then he attempted his life through having him killed by the Philistines, and now he speaks openly to his own son and to all his servants that David must be killed. Therefore loving Jonathan warned David and he hid himself. Then Jonathan persuades his father to desist and Saul uttered a meaningless oath "As the Lord liveth, he shall not be slain." And Jonathan brought David to Saul.

Thus Jonathan is seen as a peacemaker.

But David's great victory (verse 8) starts the King's hatred again and the javelin flies once more, but only strikes the wall from where he had slipped away. Then David fled and when he comes to his house his faithful wife tells him of the great danger and let him down through a window. They watched the house to kill him. The fifty-ninth Psalm throws interesting light upon this part of David's history and has of course prophetically a wider application.

And Michal practised a deception. Like Rachel she possessed teraphim, the idol-images in so much use among the Chaldeans and other nations. These were forbidden by Jehovah and yet they were secretly used. (Judges xvii:5; xviii:14.) Michal's image must have been of considerable size; she arranged it in the bed and then said to messengers "he is sick." When the deception is discovered she

lies again and said that David threatened her life. That the Scriptures record these misdeeds is but an evidence of their genuineness, however the Holy Scriptures never sanction these things. In all these attempts on David we see a foreshadowing also of the attempts which were made on the life of our Lord.

And David fled to Samuel, who had a kind of a school for prophets at Naioth in Ramah.* Saul's pursuit is in vain and he is helpless to touch the Lord's anointed. Divine power was engaged in behalf of David, and Saul himself, stripped and naked, lying down all night and all day has to bear witness to it.

5. Jonathan Protects David. Their Separation.

CHAPTER XX

1. David with Jonathan. 1-10.
2. The strengthened Bonds and the Token. 11-23.
3. Saul's Attempt to Kill Jonathan. 24-34.
4. David separated from Jonathan. 35-42.

We do not need to enlarge upon this beautiful story of the further devotion of Jonathan to David. What friendship and affection is here! Indeed the chapter contains one of the most charming incidents in this book. When David told Jonathan of his great danger, Jonathan refused

* "The 'schools of the prophets,' which were placed under the direction of experienced and approved prophets, afforded to younger men an opportunity of becoming qualified to perform the duties of the prophetic calling. The selection and the admission of individuals who were suited for the prophetic office by their personal character, and who had a divine call, undoubtedly depended on the prophetic judgment of those who presided over these institutions. As prophecy was a gift and not an art, the instructions which were imparted, probably referred merely to the study of the law, and were intended to awaken and cultivate theocratical sentiments, as well as promote a growth in spiritual life, for herein a suitable preparation for the prophetic office necessarily consisted. There are also indications found which authorize us to conclude that the revival of sacred poetry, as an art, and that theocratico-historical composition also, are to be ascribed to these religious communities as their source. Such schools existed in Ramah, Jericho, Beth-el, and Gilgal. (1 Sam. xix:18; 2 Kings ii:3, 5; iv:38.)"—Kurtz.

to believe it. But David knew there was but a step between him and death. The conversation which took place in the field is most pathetic. Both were men of faith putting their trust in Jehovah and hence this great affection. Jonathan also was deeply conscious of David's destiny as the Lord's anointed. Verses 14 and 15 bear witness to this. "And thou shalt not only while I live show me the kindness of the Lord, that I die not. But also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever, no, not when the Lord hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth." Then Jonathan caused David to make a covenant with him, for he loved him as he loved his own soul. And Jonathan had to taste his father's anger. Vicious are Saul's words to his own son, and in wrath he threw a javelin at him to smite him. How this illustrates Satan's hatred, both against Christ and those who are one with Him, as David and Jonathan were one.

Then comes the parting. They kissed one another, and wept one with another till David's weeping exceeded.* Jonathan went into the city and David into the suffering of the exile. They met but once more. (Chapter xxiii:16-18.)

6. David's Varied Experiences.

Chapter xxi-xxvii

CHAPTER XXI

1. David at Nob with Ahimelech. 1-9.
2. David's Flight to Achish, King of Gath. 10-15.

With this chapter begins the record of David's wanderings as an exile. A number of Psalms were written by him during this period of the rejection of the Lord's anointed. We shall point out some of them. These Psalms are prophetic also foreshadowing the rejection and

* Literally "till David wept loudly."

the sufferings of Christ as well as the tribulations of the pious remnant of Israel during the closing years of the age, preceding the coming and enthronement of the King of Israel, our Lord. He reached Nob after his separation from Jonathan. At Nob the tabernacle of the Lord had been established and Ahimelech ("my brother is King") the son of Ahitub (xxii:9) and great-grandson of Eli, was now exercising the priesthood. Nob was not far from Jerusalem, north of the city. (Isaiah x:32.)

He appeared before Ahimelech in a deplorable condition. It was on a Sabbath when the King's son-in-law appeared unarmed and hungry. Ahimelech became afraid and suspicious, but David invented a falsehood to allay the suspicions of the high priest. The truthfulness of the Word of God is demonstrated in this faithful report of David's failure. He was not fully trusting in his God and the result was the exercise of an endeavour to protect himself which led to the deception. How different the actions of Him who according to the flesh was the son of David! "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; who when He was reviled, reviled not again." (1 Pet. ii:22.) Then he and his companions ate the hallowed bread. Our Lord called the attention of the Pharisees to this when they murmured because His disciples had plucked the ears of corn on the Sabbath. (Matth. xii:1-8; Mark ii:23--28; Luke vi:1-5.) There are no discrepancies between the account in Samuel and the words of our Lord. Our Lord speaks of David and they that were with him, while in the record here we read that Ahimelech asked David "Why art thou alone, and no man with thee?" The young men who are mentioned later (verses 4 and 5) may have at first kept out of sight. In Mark ii:26, our Lord mentions Abiathar as high priest. This is not a discrepancy, for Abiathar was the son of Ahimelech and exercised priestly function and also was high priest. (1 Sam. xxx:7.) The story of eating the shewbread which was not lawful for him to eat is full of interest if compared with the words of our Lord. There was an inquiry of the Lord

and then Ahimelech gave him the hallowed bread. (See xxii:10.) On account of the ruin in Israel everything had become common and David and his companions did not sin in eating the shewbread; the "bread of presence" as it is called. And so our Lord was rejected, as David was, and justifies the conduct of His disciples by referring the Pharisees to David's action.* "We can see in David rejected the type of a greater, who as such has abrogated Jewish and legal ordinances in order to give to His people the true communion with Himself of which the shewbread speaks." Thus the shewbread typifies the true bread, which we use for our sustenance, as David needed it for his physical keeping.

Then Doeg ("the fearful") is mentioned. He was an Edomite and a prominent servant of Saul. David knew with the presence of Doeg that his secret was now discovered and Doeg later told Saul about it. (xxii:9.) He also received the sword of Goliath. With it he had slain the giant and, as we showed before, it is the type of Him who by death has destroyed him who has the power of death. The victory our Lord has won through death is the weapon against all our enemies.

Then we find David in Gath among the Philistines. Strange place he had selected for his protection! Why should he have gone to the strongest enemies of God and of His people? He had acted in unbelief and unbelief was dragging him down lower and lower. Instead of fleeing to God, he turned to Gath. And then for self-preservation, because he had been discovered, he feigned madness. The King of Gath drove him away. The Lord was far better than his fears. This gracious deliverance set his heart-strings vibrating with praise. Here we would ask the reader to turn to Psalm xxxiv, which David wrote, according to the inscription, when Ahimelech † drove him away and when he departed.

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* For a complete exposition see our Commentary on Matthew, Chapter xii.

† No discrepancy here. The Philistine Kings were called "Abime-

CHAPTER XXII

1. In the cave of Adullam. 1-2.
2. In Moab and Gad's message. 3-5.
3. Saul's discovery of David's visit to Nob. 6-10.
4. The murder of the Priests. 11-19.
5. David and Abiathar. 20-23.

Next we find him in the cave of Adullam ("a witness"). Here a strange company gathers around the rejected King. It consisted of 400 men. He became their captain. Some of them were in distress, others in debt, and discontented. Such were attracted to the rejected David. It was a blessed scene foreshadowing Him to whom all can gather who are in distress, who feel their debt, their sinfulness, their sorrow and their need. And a greater One than David is here. Our Lord rejected, but owned by those who acknowledge their need, has power to meet it all in the riches of His Grace. They with their captain, the Lord's anointed were "outside of the camp." Such a place there is to-day for all who know Him, who is rejected of men and so much dishonored in that which claims and bears His name. "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." (Heb. xiii:13.) And later those who had gathered around David in the cave, and suffered with him, were specially remembered. (2 Sam. xxiii:8-39.) "If we suffer we shall reign with Him." (2 Tim. ii:12.) Psalm lvii was written by David when he fled to the cave. And when he was in the cave he prayed. This prayer is embodied in Psalm cxlii. It was answered too when the Lord sent to him the 400 men. What food for meditation and reflection is here!

Then he came to Moab. His father and mother were there with him. He thought of making his nest there, yea, more than a nest, "a hold"; it was not according to the mind of the Lord. His ancestress of blessed memory, Ruth, the Moabitess, had left the land of Moab to dwell in Israel; her great-grandson David leaves the land to dwell

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lech" as the rulers of Russia are called "Czar," the rulers of Turkey, "Sultan." Achish was Abimelech of the Philistines.

in Moab. Again it was unbelief. He tried to escape the troubles which were in store for him. He had to learn patience and endurance. Therefore the Lord sent the prophet Gad with the message to depart. In all his unbelief and failures the Lord did not forsake him, but His watchful, loving eye followed His rejected servant. He cared and provided for him. No harm could reach him. He was not in Saul's hands but in the hands of the Lord. And this is our happy lot. In a psalm he saith "Thou tellest all my wanderings."

A frightful scene follows. Doeg the Edomite tells Saul of what happened at Nob. Saul, demonized Saul, orders the slaughter of the priests and while the servants of Saul refused the bloody work, the Edomite executed the command. Abiathar the son of murdered Ahimelech told David. He knew of Doeg's words to Saul about the shelter Ahimelech had given to him. At that time David wrote Psalm lii. Prophetically Doeg, the Edomite, is the type of that cunning man of sin.

Beautiful are David's words to Abiathar. (Verse 23.) They suggest the blessed assurance of salvation and preservation all receive who in faith turn to the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XXIII

1. The Victory over the Philistines at Keilah. 1-13.
2. In the wilderness of Ziph. 14-26.
3. Saul's Return. 27-29.

Keilah was about six miles southeast of Adullam. David heard of the invasion of the Philistines that they were fighting against this walled city. And he inquired of the Lord, through Abiathar, who had an ephod. (Verse 6.) David's inquiry of the Lord shows the man of faith in his submission to the Lord. He had his lapses, but at heart he owned the Lord and wanted to glorify Him. Twice he asked the Lord; the second time evidently to quiet the fears of the six hundred men who were now with him. The Lord gave

him the victory. Then poor, blinded Saul thought David was now shut up in Keilah and could not escape. He knew not the Lord and His power to protect His own. While Saul plotted David prayed and depended on the Lord, who told him that Saul would come to Keilah and that the men of Keilah would deal treacherously with him and his men. In the wilderness of Ziph Saul sought him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hands. And David learned by experience what the name of Ziph means; it means "refining." In the refining process of suffering and endurance the Shepherd-King was fitted for his coming exaltation. In this he is not a type of our Lord, but we can read our own experience here. For the last time Jonathan and David met. He came to strengthen David's hand in God. This is the true purpose of the fellowship of the Saints. What a noble character was Jonathan!

"It is difficult to form an adequate conception of the courage, the spiritual faith, and the moral grandeur of this act. Never did man more completely clear himself from all complicity in guilt than Jonathan from that of his father. And yet not an undutiful word escaped the lips of this brave man. And how truly human is his fond hope that in the days to come, when David would be king, he should stand next to his throne, his trusted adviser, as in the days of sorrow he had been the true and steadfast friend of the outlaw! As we think of what it must have cost Jonathan to speak thus, or again of the sad fate which was so soon to overtake him, there is a deep pathos about this brief interview, almost unequalled in Holy Scripture, to which the ambitious hopes of the sons of Zebedee form not a parallel but a contrast." *

The Ziphites after Jonathan's visit discovered David's hiding place to Saul but Saul could not reach him nor touch the Lord's anointed. But David at that time cried mightily to God, "Save me, O God"—"Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth"; these were

* Edersheim.

some of his utterances recorded in Psalm liv, which was written at that time.

CHAPTER XXIV

1. In the wilderness of En-gedi. 1-8.
2. David's words to Saul. 9-15.
3. Saul's answer to David. 16-22.

Saul continues in the pursuit of David and with 3000 chosen men he sought David at the rocks of the wild goats. In was in En-gedi, which means "the fountain of the young goat." There were wild rocks and the fountains of water and here David had found his refuge and strongholds. God trained him also amidst the hardships and difficulties suggested by the rocks, while the fountain suggests the refreshing which was also his blessed portion. Perhaps in that trying wilderness he poured out his heart in the way as recorded in Psalm lxiii. It is certain that he developed constantly in his faith and trust in God. And a test is now permitted to come upon him. Saul had entered a cave. David and his men were in the sides of the cave. But a few steps between him and the unsuspecting Saul! An uplifted sword, one stroke and Saul's career would have been ended. Is he going to do it? Will he take his case out of the hands of the Lord and become his own avenger? And his men remind him of an unrecorded word, which the Lord had spoken to David (verse 4) which David might have used to justify the slaying of Saul. Faith conquers. He looks upon Saul as being still the Lord's anointed and only cut off a part of the skirt of Saul's garment. What magnanimity it was! And even for this his tender conscience smote him. A marvellous, eloquent address to King Saul was delivered by David. He tells him all what he had done and what is in his heart and thus shows the purpose of his soul to leave it all with the Lord. This is faith's language. The Man of God who walks by faith can await the Lord's own time. And thus the case was not Saul against David, but Saul fighting David's Lord. The outcome is

obvious. And Saul? His reply, given in the voice of weeping, acknowledged the wrong he had done and the righteous cause of David as well as the future of David, that he would receive the Kingdom of Israel. He also made David swear not to cut off his seed. He is broken down and deeply moved. Yet his heart is unchanged.

CHAPTER XXV

1. The Death of Samuel. Verse 1.
2. Nabal and his Refusal. 2-13.
3. Abigail's deed and her prayer. 14-31.
4. David's Answer to Abigail. 32-35.
5. Nabal's death. 36-38
6. Abigail becomes David's wife. 39-44.

After the death of Samuel, briefly mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, David went still further south into the wilderness of Paran. An interesting story, the story of Nabal and Abigail, is told in this chapter. David had won a great victory over himself and over Saul. The next event records a great failure. He loses his self-control completely, and instead of manifesting the magnanimity he showed towards Saul, he breaks out in a rage and in the violence of his temper he was ready to kill Nabal and his entire household. God alone in His gracious intervention saved him from committing a crime as heinous as the one Saul committed when he slew Ahimelech, his fellow-priests and the inhabitants of Nob. How he failed! How different He was, whose rejection and suffering David foreshadowed, our Lord! What a contrast with His meekness! David was out of touch with the Lord and we read nothing here of David asking the Lord about sending the ten young men to Carmel, nor did he enquire of the Lord, when in the heat of his spirit he ordered the four hundred men to proceed on their dreadful errand.

It is true the provocation was great. He had sent the young men with a message of peace to Nabal, requesting the rich man for a little help. David had regarded the property of Nabal and his shepherds were not molested.

The exiled King had a right to expect the little help he asked. And Nabal was an unbeliever. He did not believe in David as the Lord's anointed King, but looked upon him as a slave who had left his master. He refused and insulted the King's messengers. Nabal means "fool." He is a type of natural man and especially those who reject the Lord and His message of peace. His words "my bread"—"my water"—"my flesh"—"my shearers" and the whole story reminds us of that other fool of whom our Lord spoke. He also spoke of "my barns"—"my fruits"—"my goods." (Luke xii:16–21.)

David was restrained from his evil purpose by the intervention of beautiful Abigail, the wife of Nabal. When she heard what her husband had done she at once prepared a magnificent present for David and his men. It was a princely gift, including two skins filled with wine. All this she did without consulting her husband. And the place she takes before David, her supplications, her confession, her humble prayer for forgiveness, her delicate reference to the King's sinful haste to shed blood, her faith in David's coming exaltation and her concluding request, "then remember thine handmaid"—all is so rich and beautiful. Abigal the woman with understanding and of a beautiful countenance typifies the true believer and may also be taken as a type of the church. Nabal to whom she is bound as wife is typical of the old nature, the flesh. But Nabal died and Abigail was married to David; even as the believer is dead to sin, dead to the law and is now married to another, even to Christ. (Rom. vii:4.) We leave it to the reader to follow these hints in their application.

CHAPTER XXVI

1. The Ziphites and Saul's pursuit. 1-4.
2. David again spares Saul. 5-12.
3. David's words to Abner. 13-16.
4. David's words to Saul. 17-20.
5. Saul's Confession and David's Reply. 21-25.

Hachilah, where we find David now, was six miles east of

Ziph and about half-way to En-gedi. The Ziphites once more reveal his hiding place to Saul. And Saul was rushing forward to his doom when with his three thousand chosen men he took up the hunt again. The two, the rejected King and God's true King, are close together and David finds Saul in the trench and the people round about. With David were Ahimelech, the Hittite and Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, the sister of David. They creep up to sleeping Saul. Once more his enemy is given into his hands and once more David does not want to take his case out of the Lord's hands. He is true to his own words. (Chapter xxiv:15.) Abishai, David's own nephew, counsels the smiting of Saul. But David does not want to touch the Lord's anointed. He declares "the Lord shall smite him"—or "his day shall come to die." He leaves him in the Lord's hands to deal with him as it pleases Him. He acts in faith. Would to God that all the Lord's people would act at all times in the same manner, when they suffer persecution. The sleep which had fallen upon the company was of the Lord. He can keep awake (Esther vi:1) and He can put to sleep, to suit His own will and purpose. Then David took Saul's spear, perhaps the same he had cast at him and his water-cruse. Alas! poor, apostate Saul had been deprived before of what these two things mean spiritually; he had lost his weapon to fight in faith and righteousness, he knew no longer the water, which refreshes the soul. How the spear and the water-cruse are lost to-day to nominal, disobedient, apostate Christendom!

The sleeping company is aroused. He ridicules and chides Abner for his unwatchfulness. Saul recognized David's voice and the last discourse between the two kings follows. We call attention to two statements. David witnesses to his faith and trust in the Lord. He trusts Him that He will deliver him out of all tribulation. Saul's last words to David are prophetic. "Thou shalt both do great things, and also shall prevail." David did not hear Saul's voice again after this, nor did Saul see David again. The

sad history of poor, lost Saul will soon be consummated in his visit to the witch at Endor and his miserable end.

CHAPTER XXVII

1. David's Unbelief. 1-2.
2. With Achish, King of Gath. 3-7.
3. His Slaughter and Deception. 8-12.

David became despondent. After all the gracious evidences that the Lord was with him, shielded him and guarded his very footsteps, he relapses in unbelief. Such is the heart of man! He fears for his life and then takes once more his case out of the Lord's hands and flees to Achish the king of Gath. He had been there before and at that former visit he feigned insanity and the Philistinian Ahimelech Achish of Gath had driven him away. Now he is welcomed by Achish, for he brings a small army of 600 young men with him and receives Ziklag to dwell in with his two wives and his household. And Saul after this sought him no more.

David abode there one year and four months; a long time to be away from the Lord. And at the same time he made raids upon the enemies of God and his people. He invaded the Geshurites, the Girzites and the Amalekites. It was not a real work for God, but the result of a self-centered heart and its aim was selfishness. It shows how a person whose heart is out of touch with God may outwardly be engaged in fighting evil for selfish reasons. Achish shared in the spoils, yet he deceived the King of the Philistines. And the road leads down. Unbelief drags down, lower and lower. David, as we learn from the beginning of the next chapter, became the body guard of Achish and with his men is to fight Israel. A sad record it is. How often God's people followed the same road.

7. Saul and the Witch at Endor.

CHAPTER XXVIII

1. David fully joined to Achish. 1-2.
2. Forsaken Saul. 3-6.
3. The Command to seek a Witch. 7.
4. Saul's Visit to Endor. 8-14.
5. Samuel's solemn Message. 15-20.
6. Saul's despair and departure. 21-25.

Saul's final plunge towards his awful end is the main topic of this chapter. Israel had adopted necromancy, asking the dead, and other occult and wicked practices of the Canaanitish nations. They had those who were possessed by demons; the so-called mediums of spiritism and the modern day psychical research endeavors follow the same paths. Saul had cleared the land of these necromancers. Saul became frightened by the advancing Philistines. But when he asked the Lord there was no answer. Then in despair he sought the woman with the familiar spirit at Endor. Disguised he sneaked away to the woman. And he swears unto her in the Lord's name to exempt her from all punishment in breaking the law. What presumption! He demands to see Samuel. The woman no doubt had the power to communicate with wicked spirits, who represented themselves as those who had died. It is the same in spiritualism. The messages which are transmitted through the women mediums in that cult do not emanate from the dead at all, but from lying spirits, who impersonate the dead. More than once has this been practically demonstrated. When this woman at Endor saw Samuel * she cried out in fear and at the same time she recognized the King, who told her not to be afraid. She had not expected the return of Samuel from the realms of death. Was it really Samuel or only an apparition? There can be no doubt whatever that it was

* It has been suggested that the word "Samuel" should be Saul in verse 12. The woman, it is said, recognized Saul, which would explain the second half of that verse. However, there is no reason why such a change should be made.

Samuel who came up. It was by God's own power and permission that he appeared to pronounce the final doom upon Saul. And what a message it was! "The Lord is departed from thee and become thine enemy;"—"the Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand;"—"the Lord will deliver Israel with thee into the hands of the Philistines." Then came the announcement of his death and the death of his sons. "Tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me." This means that they were to die. Perhaps the more correct rendering is given in the Septuagint version, which reads: "Tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons with thee be fallen."

Solemn is the record of Saul as given in 1 Chronicles x:13. "So Saul died for his transgressions which he committed against the Lord, even against the Word of the Lord, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it." Such was the condition and doom of the People's King, before God's King came into power. Here is a striking and significant type of the conditions on the earth before God's King, our Lord Jesus Christ, the son of David and Israel's King is enthroned. The kings of the earth and nominal Christendom are disobedient to the Word of God. They like Saul commit transgressions against the Lord and follow seducing spirits and doctrines of demons. (1 Tim. iv:1.) It is said that a number of European rulers have their own mediums and necromancers. But the kings of the earth defying God and His laws will be dragged lower still. The spirits of demons, working miracles, will yet go forth, during the closing years of this present age, and possess the kings of the earth and the whole world and gather them together to the battle of that great day of God Almighty, the battle of Armageddon. (Rev. xvi:13-16.) This is foreshadowed in Saul's apostasy and in Saul's end.

8. David and Achish. Ziklag Destroyed and Avenged.

Chapter xxix-xxx

CHAPTER XXIX

1. The objections of the Philistine lords. 1-5.
2. Achish dismisses David. 6-11.

While David's enemy, Saul, heard his coming doom, David was still with the enemies of God's people. The Philistines were gathered against Israel and David was with Achish ready to fight against the Lord's people. The lords of the Philistines however object to his presence. They still remember the song of bygone days and fear treachery. Then follows the description of how Achish and David parted. David's words expressing his great willingness to stay with the enemies of God show how deep a believer may fall when he has wandered away from God. He calls wicked Achish "my lord the King" and his own people Israel, whose anointed king he was, "the enemies." God's mercy kept him from plunging deeper than that.

CHAPTER XXX

1. The Amalekites destroy Ziklag. 1-5.
2. David's Distress and Return unto the Lord. 6-8.
3. David pursues the Amalekites. 9-10.
4. The young Egyptian and the defeat of the enemy. 11-20.
5. The threatening dissension and David's decision. 21-25.
6. The spoil sent to Judah. 26-31.

The chastening hand of the Lord now rests heavily upon wayward, backsliding David. The Amalekites had destroyed Ziklag. The entire city was burned to the ground and the women and children were taken away captive by the Amalekites. The people rose up against David and were ready to stone him. He reaps the fruit of his sowing. He had gone into an alliance with the enemies of God and His people, and now he finds that the Lord permitted the enemy to touch his possessions. The Lord through affliction, loss and sorrow spoke to the heart of David. How humiliating

that his followers were ready to stone him! They understood that his behaviour had brought upon them the disaster, that he was another Achan (Joshua vii). It was then that he turned to the Lord. "David encouraged himself in the Lord his God." Here we see the difference between him and Saul. Affliction and sorrow, the chastenings of the Lord, recall the true believer and bring him back to the Lord. He sought the presence of the Lord and once more through Abiathar, who had the ephod, enquired of the Lord. And here graciously the Lord met His servant who had failed Him! There is no word of rebuke on account of the 16 months David had wandered from the Lord, but instead the Lord assures His servant that he would recover all.

The incident of the young Egyptian is very interesting. David appears now once more as a type of our Lord. He did not foreshadow the Lord Jesus during the months he was with the Philistines. The Egyptian is a type of the unsaved. He is an Egyptian (the type of the world); he was found in the field ("the field is the world"—Matth. xiii). He was the slave of an Amalekite. Amalek as we have seen in the annotations of Exodus (Chapter xvii) and in Judges, is a type of the flesh. Behind it stands Satan. Thus the unsaved, the one who is not born again, is of the world and a slave of Amalek, serving the flesh under Satan's dominion. The physical condition of this young Egyptian also typifies the spiritual condition of the unsaved. And David in showing him mercy is a type of Christ. The young man's confession, the bread and water given to him, can easily be applied in the Gospel. The story of the Egyptian reminds us of the parable of the Good Samaritan in the Gospel of Luke. The young Egyptian is assured of his safety; the slave of the Amalekite becomes the servant of the King. The company to which he belonged is eating and drinking and dancing. They rest secure dreaming of no danger, when all at once the battle cry of the King is upon them. It is the picture of the world. Thus sudden destruction will come upon them. And David recovered all.

How differently the dissension, which threatened among David's men, would have turned out had he still been away from the Lord. But now he acts in the sweetness of grace. The great spoil is distributed among the different cities of Judah. Well may we think here of the victory of our coming King in which His people will share through His infinite Grace.

9. The Death of Saul.

CHAPTER XXXI

1. Saul wounded in battle. 1-3.
2. Saul a suicide. 4-6.
3. The victorious Philistines. 7-10.
4. The bodies recovered and burnt. 11-13.

A sad ending to one of the saddest stories of the Bible. Jonathan, Abinadab and Melchi-shua, Saul's sons, fall first. Then Saul is wounded. He asks his armour bearer to make an end of his sufferings. There is no evidence whatever of his repentance and turning unto the Lord. He died as he had lived in rebellion against Jehovah. The armour-bearer refused to kill Saul; then he fell upon his own sword and committed suicide. He is the first suicide mentioned in the Bible. Ahithopel (2 Sam. xvii:23); Zimri (1 Kings xvi:18) and Judas Iscariot (Matth. xxvii:5) are other suicides recorded in the Word.* The first chapter of the Second Book of Samuel tells us of an Amalekite who slew Saul. This is not a contradiction at all as some have declared. First Saul asked his armour-bearer to slay him; he refused. Then he fell upon his sword but was not wholly successful. In anguish he leaned upon his spear and when the Amalekite came along, he told him that his life was still in him (2 Sam. i:9) and he slew him. His end is sad and has its solemn lessons. His sin was the sparing of Amalek, we say again, the type of the flesh. Of this sin Samuel had re-

* What an awful sign of the times is the constantly increasing numbers of people who take their own lives!

minded him in his message of doom. (xxviii:18.) His disobedience ended in self-destruction. Such is sin. And an Amalekite made the end of him. Sin allowed and followed will do its dreadful work in the end, as this Amalekite, spared by Saul, ends his life.

The triumph of the Philistines is complete. Saul's body is held up to scorn in the idol-house of the Philistines and afterward his body and the bodies of his sons are recovered and buried by Jabesh. The people's choice, King Saul, has gone down in ruin and shame. All looks hopeless now. Israel's hope centers now in the coming King after God's own heart, David the son of Jesse. How he foreshadows the true King and his coming kingdom, He who is the hope of Israel, the hope of the world, as well as the hope of the church, we shall find in the Second Book of Samuel.

SECOND SAMUEL

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The Division of Second Samuel

The second Book of Samuel contains the history of David after Saul's death, his reign over Judah and over all Israel, as well as the great events which transpired during his reign. The center of the book is the record of his fall, the chastisements which he had to pass through as a result of his sin and his subsequent restoration after the rebellion of his son Absalom. The last four chapters form an appendix in which various episodes in David's life are recorded; it tells us of the victories of the King. Much in this book, even more so than in the previous history, has a typical meaning, which we shall follow as far as the purpose of our annotations permits. We make the following division:

I. **DAVID KING OF JUDAH AND THE EVENTS OF HIS REIGN.** Chapter i-iv.
   1. **David's Lamentation for Saul and Jonathan.** Chapter i.
   2. **David Anointed King over Judah.** Chapter ii:1-7.
   3. **Abner's Revolt and the War which Followed.** Chapter ii:8-32.
   4. **Abner's Deeds and End.** Chapter iii.
   5. **The Death of Ishbosheth.** Chapter iv.

II. **DAVID KING OVER ALL ISRAEL AND THE EVENTS OF HIS REIGN.** Chapter v-x.
   1. **David Anointed King Over All Israel.** Chapter v:1-5.
   2. **David's Conquest of Zion and Victory Over the Philistines.** Chapter v:6-25.
   3. **The Ark Brought to Zion.** Chapter vi.

4. **The Lord's Promise to David and the Covenant.** Chapter vii.
5. **The Extension of His Kingdom.** Chapter viii.
6. **David and Mephibosheth.** Chapter ix.
7. **The War with Ammon and Syria.** Chapter x.

III. **DAVID'S SIN, CHASTISEMENTS AND RESTORATION.** Chapter xi-xx.

1. **David's Great Sin.** Chapter xi.
2. **The Message of God and David's Confession. The Beginning of the Chastisements.** Chapter xii.
3. **Further Chastisement; Amnon, Tamar and Absalom.** Chapter xiii.
4. **David and Absalom.** Chapter xiv.
5. **Absalom's Conspiracy and David's Flight.** Chapter xv.
6. **The Sorrows and Testings of the King.** Chapter xvi.
7. **Absalom, Ahithophel and Hushai.** Chapter xvii.
8. **The Civil War and Absalom's Death.** Chapter xviii.
9. **The Return of the King.** Chapter xix.
10. **The Revolt of Sheba.** Chapter xx.

IV. **THE APPENDIX TO THE HISTORY OF DAVID.** Chapter xxi-xxiv.

1. **The Famine. The Wars with the Philistines.** Chapter xxi.
2. **David's Song of Deliverance.** Chapter xxii.
3. **The Last Words of David and the Record of the Mighty Men.** Chapter xxiii.
4. **David's Failure; the Altar on the Threshing Floor of Araunah.** Chapter xxiv.

The Analysis and Annotations

I. David King of Judah and the Events of His Reign

Chapter i-iv

1. David's Lamentation for Saul and Jonathan.

CHAPTER I

1. The Death of Saul and Jonathan announced to David. 1-10.
2. David's great Grief. 11-12.
3. The Amalekite slain. 13-16.
4. David's Lamentation. 17-27.

David heard of the death of Saul and Jonathan from the lips of the Amalekite, who also brought him the crown and the bracelet of the dead king. The story of this young man has been branded by some as a falsehood, invented to gain favor from David. It is not necessary to reconcile the supposed contradiction of the Amalekite's story with the account of Saul's death in the last chapter of the preceding book, by saying the Amalekite lied to David. We have explained this in the annotations of chapter xxxi. When the Amalekite said to David, "So I stood upon him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen," he referred to the fact that Saul had fallen upon his own sword, in committing suicide and was in great suffering. And great was David's grief when he hears the sad news. He and his companions wept and fasted in mourning over Saul, Jonathan and the people of the Lord. Then he commanded the Amalekite to be slain because he

had smitten the Lord's anointed; thus he honored Saul in his death, while the Amalekite received the punishment for his deed. Then David broke out in his great lamentation over Saul and Jonathan. The eighteenth verse as given in the authorized version is unintelligible. The Hebrew reads "and he bade them teach the children of Judah the bow;" the words "the use of" are supplied. Others read instead "the song of the bow" and claim it has reference to this lamentation, which David taught Judah. (See verse 22.) The book of Jasher ("the upright") is here mentioned again. (Joshua x:12-14.) The lamentation of David is a wonderful outpouring of soul. First he speaks of the calamity which has come to Israel in the death of Saul and Jonathan (verse 19-22); then he extols the virtues of both. What grace this manifests if we consider that Saul had hunted David and put upon him so many afflictions! He does not refer to it in a single word. Beautiful beyond description are his loving words on Jonathan.

> I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan:
> Very pleasant has thou been unto me.
> Thy love to me was wonderful,
> Passing the love of women.

But there is one whose love is greater than David's love for Jonathan, even our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. David Anointed King over Judah.

CHAPTER II:1-7

1. David's inquiry of the Lord. 1-3.
2. Anointed King over Judah. 4.
3. His Message to the Men of Jabesh-Gilead. 5-7.

The first thing mentioned of David after his lamentation over Saul and Jonathan is that he inquired of the Lord. He would not do a single step towards claiming the rights which belonged to him without consulting the Lord. It

shows how David, with all his faults, was in submission to the Lord. He waits on the Lord ready to follow His guidance and in this David acknowledged his complete dependence on Him who had chosen him as His King over His people. In this he is a type also of our Lord Jesus. The answer came to him at once that he was to go up into the cities of Judah. Then the men of Judah came and anointed him King over the house of Judah. There is nothing ostentatious about it nor does he take any steps whatever to extend his God-given rights beyond the tribe of Judah. His first act as King was to thank the men of Jabesh-gilead for the kindness they had done in the burial of Saul. He also exhorted them to be strong and announced his kingship over Judah.

3. Abner's Revolt and the War which Followed.

CHAPTER II:8-32

1. Abner makes Ish-bosheth King over Israel. 8-11.
2. The defeat of Abner. 12-17.
3. Abner and Joab; Joab's victory. 18-32.

God's King began his reign in quietness, and opposition and open revolt followed at once. Abner, who had been the captain of Saul's host, took a son of Saul by the name of Ish-bosheth and made him King in Gilead. The original name of this son was "Esh-baal," which means "the fire of Baal." (1 Chronicles viii:33.) "Ish-bosheth" was his other name; it means "man of shame." He seems to have been a weakling and a tool in Abner's hand. Ish-bosheth's influence was soon extended over all Israel and the false King ruled, while David was only acknowledged by the faithful men of Judah. David's reign over Judah was seven years and six months. Here are faint hints of what will be repeated in the future history of Israel. Another Ish-bosheth, a pretender to the throne of Israel, the false King, will be in the earth. He comes in his own name, with no claim whatever to the throne. And the true King, like

David, will only be acknowledged by a faithful remnant of his people. The seven years and a half remind us of the last period of Israel's history when these things come to pass. However, Ish-bosheth's weakness and especially his end makes a fuller application on these lines impossible.

The other prominent person is Joab,* the son of Zeruiah, who went out with the servants of David. They met Abner's force about six miles northwest of Jerusalem by the pool of Gibeon. Then followed at Abner's suggestion a conflict between twelve young men of Benjamin, the subjects of Ish-bosheth, and twelve of David's servants. A wicked scene followed. They slaughtered each other at Helkath-hazzurim, "the field of sharp swords," after which there was a severe battle which ended with the defeat of Abner. All this shows the sorrowful conditions which existed among Israel, foreshadowing again the worse conditions throughout this age and especially at the close of it. Then follows the record of the three sons of Zeruiah, Joab, Abishai and Asahel. Asahel followed hard after Abner and though repeatedly warned by Abner, continued in his pursuit till Abner in self defence slew him. The battle ended with the loss of nineteen servants of David and Asahel, while Abner lost 360 men. "Shall the sword devour forever?" was Abner's question. As long as God's true King does not occupy the throne, ruling in righteousness and in peace, wars and bloodshed will continue. The sword cannot be stopped till He reigns. In His coming Kingdom nations will learn war no more and beat their swords into plowshares.

* Joab was David's nephew. See 1 Sam. xxvi:6; 1 Chronicles ii:16.

4. Abner's Deeds and End.

CHAPTER III

1. The long War and its Results. 1.
2. David's family. 2-5.
3. Abner's defiant deed. 6-7.
4. Abner and Ish-bosheth. 8-11.
5. Abner's Defection to David. 12.
6. David's Request. 13-16.
7. Abner with David. 17-22.
8. Abner's end. 23-30.
9. David's lamentation over Abner. 31-39.

The first verse speaks of the long war between the house of Saul and the house of David. And David waxed stronger and stronger. The weakness of the King in giving way to the flesh is next faithfully recorded; his self-indulgence in his different marriages. Alas! he began his sowing in the flesh from which later he was to reap such a sad harvest. Six sons are mentioned, born to David by his six wives. Three of these sons became a source of sorrow and grief to him. Amnon's vile deed is found in chapter xiii. Absalom was a still greater trial to him. Adonijah became the rival of Solomon. (1 Kings i:4.) In this record of taking these different women as wives, in this gross indulgence of the flesh, he prepared himself for the great sin of his life. Disorder and much confusion followed. Abner's deed in taking Rizpah insulted Saul's house and Ish-bosheth protested and Abner's fury came upon the weakling whom he had made King. Then suddenly Abner professed belief in David's God-given kingdom. His arrogant pride is seen in verse 10; as if it was in his power to set up the throne of David over all Israel, from Dan to Beer-sheba. The poor counterfeit king was silenced. Then we see Abner entering negotiations with David. Had David again relapsed that he fell in with Abner? We do not hear a word that he inquired of the Lord. He makes a condition under which Abner is to see his face. Michal, Saul's daughter, the first

wife he had, who was now the wife of Phaltiel, is to be brought to him. He then received her after his request to Ish-bosheth, while her husband accompanied her as far as the border of Judah. The subsequent history, Michal's mockery, shows that it was a mistake for David to take her back. How different all would have been if David had inquired of the Lord.

Abner, the shrewd schemer, was then entertained by David in a great banquet at which occasion he offered to make David ruler over all Israel. And David listened and sent him away in peace. But was it God's way and God's plan to have His anointed made King through such an instrument? Abner's death frustrating his plans gives the answer. Joab, moved by envy, jealousy and bitter hatred, slew Abner in the same way as he had slain his brother Asahel. He died for the blood of Asahel he had shed. An insinuation is made as if Joab's deed was justified as the avenger. This however could not be sustained by the law for Abner's deed in slaying Asahel was in self-defence. But David cleared himself from so abominable a deed. "I and my kingdom are guiltless before the Lord forever from the blood of Abner." A public mourning is instituted in which Joab is forced to partake and the King lamented over Abner. "And all the people took notice of it, and it pleased them, as whatsoever the King did pleased all the people." The King's wise behaviour had its effect upon the people and thus his kingdom was strengthened.

5. The Death of Ish-bosheth.

CHAPTER IV

1. Ish-bosheth in despair. 1-3.
2. Mephibosheth, the lame son. 4.
3. The End of Ish-bosheth. 5-8.
4. The punishment of the murderers. 9-12.

Abner's death meant the speedy end of Ish-bosheth's pretentious reign. Baanah and Rechab were his captains and became his murderers. While Ish-bosheth was resting in

the heat of the day they sneaked in and murdered the sleeping son of Saul, then brought the head to David. They claimed to be instruments of God in the execution of the wicked deed, expecting approval and a reward from David. But the King received them in a different way. Here David's trust in Jehovah breaks through the dark clouds and the King's heart is revealed. "As the Lord liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity." He acknowledges the Lord's gracious help in the past and his present confidence in Him. His case had rested in Jehovah's hands and in the ghastly deed of the two captains the King did not see Jehovah's intervention in his behalf, but he looked upon them as murderers. Swift judgment was executed upon them. David is now through these circumstances the sole and undisputed claimant of the throne of Israel and his anointing as King over all Israel must speedily follow. Through all the sad occurrences since Abner had made Ish-bosheth King, David had maintained his integrity. In all the evil deeds, the bloodshed and cold-blooded murders he had no part. He acted in justice. In this at least he is a type of Him who will reign over the earth in righteousness.

We must not overlook verse 4 in which Jonathan's son Mephibosheth is mentioned for the first time. He was the only representative of Saul's line, a helpless cripple. His story and David's kindness to him we shall soon follow.

II. David King Over All Israel and the Events of His Reign

Chapter v-x

1. David Anointed King over all Israel.

CHAPTER V:1-5

1. David anointed King over all Israel. 1-3.
2. Duration of his Reign. 4-5.

The events of the reign of David over Judah had a beneficial effect upon all Israel. After Ish-bosheth's death all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron. It is a blessed scene when they appear to anoint him King over all Israel. 1 Chronicles xii should here be consulted. In that chapter the names of those are given who stood by David. In verse 38 we read: "All these men of war, that could keep rank, came with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make David King over all Israel; and all the rest also of Israel were of one heart to make David King." The coming of all Israel to Hebron was one of the most magnificent spectacles in the history of the nation. One only needs to take a pencil and add the numbers mentioned in 1 Chron. xii:24-37 to find what a great army had gathered to make David King. There were 1222 chiefs and 339,600 men. Here we see a united Israel swept by a tremendous enthusiasm. Now they own him as their own bone and flesh; the victories of the past are remembered as well as the divine promise that he, David the Bethlehemite, should be the Shepherd of Israel as well as their captain.

But there is coming for Israel a greater day than the

day in Hebron, when they anointed David King. It foreshadows but faintly the glorious day when their long rejected King-Messiah, the Son of David, comes again. Then they will own Him and He will own them. They will also know and remember all God has done through Him. He will then indeed be the Shepherd and King of Israel. All this and much more is foreshadowed in David's coronation and his reign. David is the type of the coming reign of our Lord as "King of Righteousness" while Solomon and his reign typify Him as "King of Peace." And David made a covenant with them in Hebron as the Lord Jesus will enter into covenant relation with the nation in the day of His Return.

Then the duration of David's reign is given. Seven years and six months he reigned over Judah and over all Israel and Judah 33 years. The record here does not speak of the great feast which was made at Hebron. We find this also mentioned in 1 Chronicles xii:39-40. It is typical of the time of joy and rejoicing in Israel and throughout the world, when the true King has come. Then the great feast of which Isaiah speaks will take place. (Is. xxv:6-10.)

2. David's Conquest of Zion and Victory over the Philistines.

CHAPTER V:6-25

1. David's Conquest of Zion. 6-10.
2. Hiram King of Tyre. 11-12.
3. David's additional concubines and wives. 13-16.
4. The Victory over the Philistines. 17-25.

Zion is closely linked with David's anointing as King over all Israel. Here 1 Chronicles xi must be read for a more complete account of what took place. Jerusalem is now to become the capital of the great kingdom. The oldest name was Salem; the name of Jebus was given to it by the Jebusites (Judges xix:10). After David's conquest the ancient name was restored and it became known as Jerusalem

("habitation of peace"). The town had previously been taken (Judges i:8) but the stronghold of the upper city, Mount Zion, remained in the hands of the Jebusites. David took the stronghold. Jebusite means "the one who treads down." It reminds us of the words of our Lord, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled." (Luke xxi:24.) Jerusalem and Zion are still trodden down by the Gentiles. The day is coming when the King will end all this. Jerusalem is yet to be "the city of the great King." (Ps. xlviii.) Here we have once more a prophetic foreshadowing of what will take place, only on a larger scale, when He, who is greater than David, begins His long promised reign in the midst of His people. After this we shall find much more about Zion, especially in the prophets and in the psalms. It is the place Jehovah has chosen. (Ps. cxxxii:13-14.) To this place, where his throne was, David also brought the ark. When our Lord establishes His kingdom, Zion will be the glorious and the beautiful place. "This is my rest forever; here will I dwell; for I have desired it." (Ps. cxxxii:14.) Then He will bless out of Zion (Ps. cxxviii:5); and out of Zion shall go forth the law (Is. ii:3). He will be enthroned upon the holy hill of Zion (Ps. ii:6); the rod of His strength cometh out of Zion (Ps. cx:2); Zion will be the joy of the whole earth. (Ps. xlviii:2.)

Then Hiram the King of Tyre is mentioned. He sent messengers to David, as well as cedar trees; carpenters and masons, and they built David a house. It must be understood that we have in this and the events which follow not a strict chronology. The children mentioned were born at a later period. All is put in here to show how David grew great and that the Lord was with him. Hiram, the Gentile King, and the messengers he sent, are typical of that day, when our Lord reigns in Zion and "the Kings af Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents"—when all nations shall serve Him. (Ps. lxxii:10-11.)

The Hebrew names of the eleven sons of David are of deep significance. It seems the story of the redemption which is

in Him, whom David foreshadows, is made known in these names. Shammuah (heard); Shobab (returning); Nathan (he has given); Solomon (peace); Ibhar (the Lord chooses); Elishua (my God is salvation); Nepheg (budding); Japhia (glorious); Elishama (God heareth); Eliada (whom God knoweth); Eliphalet (my God is escape). This is a most blessed revelation contained in those names; and some Christians can say there is no meaning in names! Read them in their meaning and ponder over each as telling forth the very Gospel story from start to finish.

Twice David enquired of the Lord concerning the Philistines. Once he is told to go up and the Lord gave him the victory and he burned the images of the Philistines. It is another picture of how the coming King will make an end of idolatry. Again he asked the Lord and was told not to go up. Then the Lord smote the Philistines Himself. In all David was obedient.

3. The Ark Brought to Zion.

CHAPTER VI

1. The Ark fetched by David. 1-5.
2. Uzzah; his error and death. 6-9.
3. The Ark in the house of Obed-edom. 10-11.
4. The Ark brought into David's City. 12-19.
5. Michal's mockery of David. 20-23.

It is of importance to read 1 Chronicles xiii for a better understanding of how the ark was brought from Kirjath-jearim to David's city. The book of Chronicles contains these larger records because in that book these events are described in their theocratic character, while in Samuel the outward aspect of David's kingdom is followed. David issued the call that the people with the priests and the Levites should gather to bring again the ark of God. (1 Chro. xiii:2-3.) However we do not read anything more about the Levites, who alone were commissioned to carry the ark. It is evident that David neglected to follow the divine instructions given in the law concerning the handling of the

ark. (See Numbers iv.) This neglect may be traced to the fact that David did not inquire of the Lord. The way they transported the ark was the way of the Philistines. (1 Sam. vi:7.) When Uzzah put forth his hand to steady the ark, he was smitten for his error and died. God had spoken to His people and taught them the lesson that the ways of the Philistines and disobedience to His Word in holy things demands His judgment. How many in the past and more so to-day act like Uzzah when in service for God they employ the methods of the world and disregard entirely His Word. Godly fear and faithful submission to the Word of God are essentials in true service for God. Service without these is often a snare and results in dishonour.

Then the progress of the ark was arrested, because David filled with fear would not remove it to his city. The ark found a resting place for three months in the house of Obed-edom ("servant of Edom"); he was a Levite and therefore authorized to care for the ark. (1 Chron. xxvi:1-5.) Blessing rested upon his house. The judgment of Uzzah and the blessing of Obed-edom had a great effect upon David. "So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with gladness." This is all we find in our chapter. But how did he bring the ark up? 1 Chronicles xv gives the answer. "Then David said, none ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites; for them hath the Lord chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto Him for ever." The sons of Kohath, Merari, Gershom, etc., are given there. All is now done in accordance with the Word of God and blessing follows. And David filled with divine joy danced, girded with a linen ephod, before the Lord. After the ark had been set in its proper place in the tabernacle which David had pitched and the burnt offerings and peace offerings had been brought, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord. In his dancing the King had taken a place amidst the people. And Michal, who is called here not the wife of the King, but "the daughter of Saul," despised David.

She looked upon David's holy joy as an indecent humiliation, while the King declared he would even be more vile than thus and base in his own sight. What a contrast with the pride of Saul which is now manifested in his daughter Michal. And what happened when the ark had been put into the tabernacle? 1 Chronicles xvi:4-36 tells us how David appointed Levites to minister and then he delivered into the hands of Asaph and his brethren a great Psalm of Praise. And that sublime utterance looks forward to a far more glorious day, when the Lord dwells in Zion in the midst of an obedient people. Then the heavens will be glad and the earth rejoice and among all the nations it will be said "Jehovah reigneth"; and even nature will sing in the presence of the Lord. (1 Ch. xvi:31-36.)

4. The Lord's Promise to David and the Covenant.

CHAPTER VII

1. David's Desire. 1-3.
2. Nathan receives the Message for David. 4-17.
3. David in the Presence of Jehovah. 18-29.

We reach now a climax. The Lord speaks and reveals His great purposes He had in His eternal councils for David, the King after His own heart. We behold the King in peace sitting in his own house; he had rest from all his enemies. In pious meditation the heart of the King had but one great thought, one great ambition. The Prophet Nathan is in his presence and to him he speaks. "See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains." And Nathan told him to do all that was in his heart. But he had spoken without divine authority. God knew all David planned and what was in his heart. While His prophet encouraged David to carry out his wishes, God meant otherwise.

That night Nathan received an important message. The Lord told Nathan that David thought of building Him a house, but that the Lord would build David a house. Then He promises him a son. "He shall build an house for my

name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever." Solomon is first in view, but he is only a type of Him, who said while on earth "a greater than Solomon is here." In Christ alone this great covenant-promise is to be fulfilled. Chastening for his offspring is announced, but a disannullment of the covenant is impossible, for God's gifts and calling are without repentance. "But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee, thy throne shall be established forever." More than that, this great covenant was confirmed by the oath of Jehovah. "Once I have sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me." (Ps. lxxxix:35-36.) And when He was about to come, the Son of David according to the flesh, but also David's Lord, He who spoke these words to Nathan, it was divinely announced "the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David. And He shall reign forever and of His Kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke i:32-33.) That throne and that kingdom He has not yet received. He fills the Father's throne in the highest heaven, but all heaven and earth waits for the appointed time when He will come again to claim His crown-rights and receive the world-wide kingdom, which David in inspired songs of praise so often beheld. (Ps. lxxii.) "And this prophecy refers neither only to Solomon nor only to Christ; nor has it a twofold application, but it is a covenant-promise which, extending along the whole line, culminates in the Son of David, and in all its fulness applies only to Him. These three things did God join in it, of which one necessarily implies the other, alike in the promise and in the fulfilment: a unique relationship, a unique kingdom, and a unique fellowship and service resulting from both. The unique relationship was that of Father and Son, which in all its fulness only came true in Christ (Heb. i:5). The unique kingdom was that of the Christ, which would have no end (Luke i:32, 33; John iii:35). And the unique

sequence of it was that brought about through the temple of His body (John ii;19), which will appear in its full proportions when the New Jerusalem comes down out of heaven (Rev. xxi:1-3).

"Such was the glorious hope opening up wider and wider, till at its termination David could see 'afar off' the dawn of the bright morning of eternal glory; such was the destiny and the mission which, in His infinite goodness, God assigned to His chosen servant. Much there was still in him that was weak, faltering, and even sinful; nor was he, whose was the inheritance of such promises, even to build an earthly temple. Many were his failings and sins, and those of his successors; and heavy rods and sore stripes were to fall upon them. But that promise never failed."* And to this we add, nor will the promise ever fail in the future. Even now all is preparing for Him who alone is the Hope of the world. "Thy Kingdom come" is still the prayer, nor will it ever come till the King's coronation day arrives. And Nathan delivered faithfully the great covenant message. David's response is beautiful, yea it measures up to the fullness of Grace the gracious Lord had bestowed upon him. He does not seek the fellowship of Nathan to talk over this unspeakably wonderful promise. He sat before the Lord. All the thoughts in him, planning to work and to build the Lord a house, were forever hushed. He is in His presence as a worshipper, pouring out his grateful heart. Jehovah's Grace has touched the innermost cords of his soul; they give forth their sweet vibrations, which ascend in a holy melody to the courts above. He is humbled, bowed in the dust. Who am I Lord God? and what is my house that thou hast brought me hitherto?—He believes all he has heard; he trusts in every word. His prayer is "do as thou hast said." What an hour it was when the King with the message of Grace and Mercy was in the presence of the Lord! May we who are the recipients of even greater

* Edersheim in Bible History.

grace in our Lord Jesus Christ respond to that grace as David did.

5. The Extension of His Kingdom.

CHAPTER VIII

1. The Philistines and Moab smitten. 1-2.
2. Hadadezer overthrown. 3-8.
3. Further conquests and triumphs. 9-14.
4. David's reign and his associates. 15-18.

Great conquests and victories follow. David arose from the presence of the Lord to go forth to conquer. With such a message he had heard, assuring him of the Lord's presence and power, of the success of his kingdom, he began to extend his kingdom over the different nations which surrounded the land. The Lord was with him and preserved him whithersoever he went. The history of these wars for the enlargement of the Kingdom of David we shall have occasion to follow a little closer in our annotations of the first book of Chronicles. The extension of the Kingdom of our Lord when He comes and begins His Kingly work among the nations, to rule them with a rod of iron, is foreshadowed in these events.

When we read in verse 15 of David's reign executing judgment and justice we have another faint picture of the rule of the coming King. The leading officers of the Kingdom are mentioned. Joab was the general over his army; Jehosaphat the recorder. Zadok and Ahimelech were the priests; Seraiah the scribe. Benaiah had charge of the Cherethites and Pelethites; these two names mean "executioners and runners," while David's sons were also ruling with him. Order prevailed in all things. When that true Kingdom will be established on earth there will also be those who rule under the King, who have charge over five or ten cities. (Luke xix:17-18.) David's sons who ruled with him may represent typically believers who are sons of God in Christ and fellowheirs with Him.

6. David and Mephibosheth.

CHAPTER IX

1. Mephibosheth brought to David. 1-6.
2. Grace and Mercy shown to him. 7-13.

The story of Mephibosheth is the first thing mentioned after the government of David had been fully established. Typically it reveals the Gospel in a beautiful way, and dispensationally the kindness of God which will be manifested in the coming kingdom. Mephibosheth is a type of the sinner and the condition in which he is in. He was helpless, being lame of both feet. How he became lame is found in chapter iv:4. He fell and became lame, a helpless cripple. It reminds us of the fall of man and the helpless condition into which sin has put man. Therefore he could not come to David. He had to be carried into the King's presence. The sinner cannot come of himself to the Saviour; He has to seek him out. And David wanted to show him "the kindness of God" for Jonathan's sake. Thus the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man hath appeared. (Titus iii:4.) God for Christ's sake shows His great kindness to sinful man. Mephibosheth means "shame out of the mouth"; when he hears from David's lips what kindness was prepared for him he confessed with his mouth his own shame and nothingness. "What is thy servant that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?" And what words of Grace came from David's lips! Surely the kindness of God is here fully made known. He is lifted from his low place of shame to take a place at the King's table "as one of the King's sons." It is the kindness of God as made known in the Gospel of His Son our Lord Jesus Christ. He takes us out of our shame and makes us one of His sons. "So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem; for he did eat continually at the King's table; and was lame on both feet." When the Kingdom has come the King will show such grace and

kindness to the poor and needy. (Isaiah xi:1-5; Ps. lxxii: 1-4.)

7. The War with Ammon and the Syrians.

CHAPTER X

1. David and Hanun. 1-5.
2. Ammon and the Syrians smitten. 6-10.

The chapter with the war against Ammon and the Syrians is the prelude to the great sin of David. While Joab is carrying on the siege of Rabbah, the last city of the Ammonites, David, no doubt flushed with the great victory and prosperity, remained in his house and committed his awful sin. The war with Ammon originated through the insults which Hanun the King of Ammon had heaped upon David's ambassadors. David wanted to show kindness also to Hanun as his father Nahash had shown kindness to David. We have no record of this kindness. In this endeavour David did certainly not follow the right course, for Ammon was an enemy, and while Nahash showed some kindness to David during his exile, he also had reproached Israel and was ready to thrust out the right eyes of the men of Jabesh-gilead. (1 Sam. xi:1-3.) Hanun's deed in treating David's peaceful messengers in so shameful a way showed that he was a wicked man like his father and not worthy of David's kindness. Had he inquired of the Lord the messengers would have been spared these indignities. Ammon then formed an alliance with the Syrians, but Joab smote them. The greatest victory is recorded in verses 15-19. The King appeared himself to lead his hosts against the mighty foe and their overthrow followed. It foreshadows the day of final victory over the rebellious nations, led by the beast (Rev. xix:19-20) when the true King comes to fight against those nations.

III. David's Sin, Chastisement and Restoration

Chapter xi-xx

1. David's Great Sin.

CHAPTER XI

1. David's great Sin. 1-5.
2. David Sends for Uriah. 6-13.
3. The murder of Uriah. 14-25.
4. David makes Bath-sheba his wife. 26-27.

We see the King once more in his house. He sent Joab, his servants and all Israel to battle again against Ammon. Was it not his business as King to go forth with Israel as he had done before? Instead he remains in ease and comfort at home. Evidently he rested all day on his couch, during the heat of the day, and when the cool evening came he walked upon the roof of his house. He had been in self-indulgence and was self-satisfied with his great achievements. The spirit which characterized later Nebuchadnezzar when he walked in his palace (Dan. iv:20) puffed up with pride, which preceded his great humiliation, was no doubt David's spirit also. Had he remained in the presence of the Lord, humble and depending on Him, as we saw him after the Lord had spoken through Nathan (vii:18) this awful sin would not have happened. How often it has been repeated in the experiences of God's people! Nor did this great sin like a mighty giant ensnare him suddenly. The way for it had been prepared. He had given way to the flesh before in taking wives and concubines. We read nothing of self-restraint or self-judgment in his life up to his fall. And had he not disobeyed the law in multiplying wives unto himself? It is written:

"Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away." (Deut. xvii:17.) Had he really walked constantly in the presence of the Lord he would have heeded the warning of His law. What warning there is for all believers! The flesh is the same to-day as it ever was; it does not change. We are told "to make no provision for the flesh." (Rom. xiii:14.) Paraphrased this means, do not nourish the flesh by the indulgence of it; flee fleshly, youthful lusts. And now the culmination is reached. "I made a covenant with mine eyes; How then should I look upon a maid;" thus spake Job. (Job xxxi:1.) David knew no such covenant. He looks where he should not have looked and sin soon follows. It is a solemn illustration of James i:14-15. "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death." The King of all Israel had become another Achan. "I saw—I coveted—I took." (Josh. vii: 21.)* And sin follows sin. The offspring of sin is sin. What cunningness and deception followed. But honest Uriah frustrates his wicked plan. Did not David's conscience smart under it? No doubt it was deadened. Then he becomes actually the murderer of Uriah the Hittite. When the news of the death of Uriah is announced to David, hypocrisy is crowned in the words of the King, "Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword devoureth one as another." And here we read still the dreadful record, the sin of David and how God dealt with it.

"David, too, has faced that ever since, and faces it still: he will face it ever. It is put away, that sin, yet it remains, and will remain, type of all sins of His people, and of God's dealing with them: out of the holy light of eternity

* It need scarcely be pointed out, how this truthful account of the sins of Biblical heroes evinces the authenticity and credibility of the Scriptural narratives. Far different are the legendary accounts which seek to palliate the sins of Biblical personages, or even to deny their guilt. Thus the *Talmud* denies the adultery of David on the ground that every warrior had, before going to the field, to give his wife a divorce, so that Bathsheba was free. We should, however, add, that this view was controverted.—Edersheim.

they will never pass,—out of our memories never! Here is man, here is his condemnation,—redeemed, saved, justified man! Thyself, reader; myself. Cease ye from man forever!—from ourselves, sinner or saint! Turn we to God forever, and let us ascribe greatness and salvation to Him alone.

"This is what an unexercised conscience can bring a David to. This is what lack of self-judgment, with temptation and opportunity, may make a saint! Shall we not cry afresh, with David himself, 'Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting'?" *

And seven days later the equally guilty woman becomes David's wife. And she became the mother of Solomon. We find her mentioned in the Genealogy of Matthew I. Surely Grace and Mercy covered their sin. Yet what a trail of sorrow, misery and unrest follows! We shall find in chapters which follow the awful results. Incest, fratricide, rebellion, civil war and the King a fugitive! What a man soweth that he will also reap.

2. The Message of God and David's Confession. The Beginning of the Chastisement.

CHAPTER XII

1. The Lord's Message through Nathan. 1-4.
2. David's Anger. 5-6.
3. Thou art the man! 7-9.
4. The Chastisement. 10-12.
5. David's Confession. 13.
6. The death of the child announced. 14.
7. The death of the child and David's grief. 15-23.
8. Solomon born. 24-25.
9. Rabbah taken. 26-31.

The Lord was displeased with what David had done. Nathan comes with his message in the form of a parable. His outburst of anger and condemnation of the injustice

* Numerical Bible.

done to the poor man shows that he did not think of his own case. Yet sorrow and unrest were his portion; he tried to cover up his sin and as a result was in the deepest agony. Psalms like the sixth, the thirty-eighth, the thirty-second and others tell us of the deep soul exercise through which he passed. Then Nathan pointed at him with his soul piercing, "Thou art the man!" First the Prophet tells him all the Lord had done for him; he reminds him of all God's kindness. What had David done? He had despised the Lord's commandment; had killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword and taken his wife. Then the chastisement is announced. He had slain Uriah with the sword of the children of Ammon—the sword should now never depart from his house. He had taken Uriah's wife—others should take his wives. He had done it secretly—but, said Jehovah, I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun. We shall find the sentence executed in chapter xiii:28-39; xvi:21-22; xviii:14.

Then the King's heart broke. "I have sinned against the Lord." It was at that time that, his soul filled with deepest sorrow, and yet illumined with the light from above, he uttered that wonderful penitential Psalm, the fifty-first. "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight, that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest." All the inward corruption now is revealed to him, as many a saint after him has found out by bitter experience that in our flesh there dwelleth no good thing. "Behold I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Ps. li:5.) And when he prayed "take not Thy Holy Spirit from me"—he must have had a vision of Saul, the mad King, when the Spirit had left him and an evil one possessed his heart. But David knew God and God knew David. He is in the light and uncovers all in His presence. Then David announced the divine mercy, "the Lord hath also taken away thy sin." And Nathan added "because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto

thee shall surely die." That was the bitterness of it. Up to the present time infidels and rejectors of the Word of God point to David's sin and blaspheme, though the very things they sneer at are the things which they practice. The child died and David's grief was great. All his fasting and night long prayer did not change the divine sentence. But he also knew the comfort of hope and expresses it beautifully. "I shall go to him, but he shall not return unto me."

And has it no meaning that Solomon's birth is recorded immediately after these sad and solemn incidents? Solomon means "Peaceful." Peace had come to his heart; the divine favour was restored unto him, yet the chastisement grievous and sore would follow him in the future. And then the Lord named also Solomon. He called him "Jedediah." This means "Beloved of Jehovah." He is the blessed type of God's own Son. For us He is "Peace" —He who hath made peace and our sin is covered by His precious blood. To God He is "the Beloved." The record of the fall of Rabbah closes this chapter. What is recorded in verse 31 was cruel and barbarous.* Ammon did horrible things to the women of Israel. (See Amos i:13.) A fearful retribution came upon them. How often it has been repeated in history, even down to the 20th century with all its boasted civilization, now collapsed in the greatest and most awful war the world has ever witnessed. And thus it will continue to the end, till the true King comes.

3. Further Chastisement. Amnon, Tamar and Absalom.

CHAPTER XIII

1. Amnon's wicked desire. 1-5.
2. The Incest. 6-14.
3. His hatred. 15-18.
4. Amnon murdered. 19-36.
5. Absalom's flight. 37-39.

"Behold I will raise up evil against thee out of thine

* However, there is a doubt about the translation. It has been rendered in the following way: "And he set them to saws and iron picks and iron axes and made them labor at the brick kiln."

own house." This was Jehovah's sentence and it is now carried out. The evil which he had nourished in his heart, the passion which he had fed now breaks out in his own family. His oldest sons and Tamar, a daughter of David, half sister to Amnon, are the chief actors in the first tragedy. Amnon means "faithful." Thus he should have been, but he is the very opposite. Brought up in the midst of scenes of license, as it must have been in David's harem, the lust of the flesh gets the upper hand and the awful deed, a positive transgression of the law (Lev. xx:17) is committed. The deed had been precipitated by a satanic adviser, Jonadab, a subtle man, and when it was done violent hate gave way to the violent passion of Amnon. Unhappy Tamar, outraged, insulted and hated, appears with her virgin-princess gown torn, ashes on her head, her hand on top of her head (the oriental way of expressing a heavy burden) and crying, and her brother Absalom discovers the reason of her sorrow. He then hated his brother Amnon. David heard of it also and was very wroth, but he made no attempt to deal with his son. We do not read a word that he even rebuked him. "The gloss of the Septuagint is likely to be correct, that David left unpunished the incest of Amnon with Tamar, although committed under peculiarly aggravating circumstances, on account of his partiality to him as being his first born son. This indulgence on the part of his father may also account for the daring recklessness which marked Amnon's crime. But a doting father, smitten with moral weakness, might find in the remembrance of his own past sin an excuse for delay, if not a barrier to action; for it is difficult to wield a heavy sword with a maimed arm." *

After two years the reckoning day comes. Absalom ("the father of peace") becomes the murderer of his brother. It was an awful deed. In the midst of merry-making, Amnon filled with wine, with no chance to repent, is cruelly slain. The sword is unsheathed and fell upon David's house. The harvest is on. What a man soweth

* History of Judah and Israel.

that he will reap—murder for murder. It was an awful blow to David, for Amnon, his beloved first-born, the son Ahinoam, was dead. Exaggerated tidings reach the court of David. "Absalom hath slain all the King's sons and there is not one of them left." And wicked Jonadab, the instigator of Amnon's crime, appears again and acts as comforter of the King. Jonadab is one of the most abominable characters in Bible history. We do not read of him again. Absalom the fratricide fled to Talmai, his maternal grandfather. He remained there three years; so this chapter covers a period of five years. Alas! who was responsible for it all? The scenes of lust and murder, outrage and bloodshed, revolt and rebellion, sorrow upon sorrow, grief upon grief, start with David's great sin. Pardoned he was, restored in every sense of the word, yet God maintains His holiness and chastised His servant.

4. David and Absalom.

CHAPTER XIV

1. Joab's scheme. 1-3.
2. The woman of Tekoah before the King. 4-20.
3. Joab brings Absalom to Jerusalem. 21-24.
4. Absalom's beauty. 25-27.
5. Absalom sees his father. 28-33.

In all these records of those sad events we hear not a word that David inquired of the Lord. Joab now appears upon the scene again and that for evil, though he did not mean to do evil to the King. He concocts a scheme by which Absalom is to be brought back into the favor of the King. This he must have tried many times before, for verses 19 and 22 indicate this. It seems almost as if Joab imitated Nathan, when he came with his message to David. But God had not sent him and David's conscience was not touched. The wisdom he used was not the wisdom from above, but the wisdom of a cunning man. The whole story was deception and "the wise woman" of Tekoah lent her-

self as a willing instrument. And David finds out that it is all a plot and, blinded by a mere love for Absalom, without thinking of the claims of God in this case, he becomes a willing victim to the scheme of Joab. And so Absalom was brought back. The King commands, "Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face." It was an evil hour when it happened. Absalom's rebellion and the King's exile were the fruit of the unscrupulous plot of Joab.

Absalom's physical beauty was great with magnificent hair.* He was thus fitted to do the work of winning the people to himself and became the leader of a rebellion. The deed he had done in avenging the crime against his sister was most likely looked upon by the mass of the people as a noble and heroic deed. That behind the beautiful exterior there was a proud, violent and evil spirit may be seen in his deed, when after Joab's refusal to come to him, he set the barley field of Joab on fire. Then a reconciliation between David and Absalom followed: "Once more we notice here the consequences of David's fatal weakness, as manifested in his irresolution and half-measures. Morally paralysed, so to speak, in consequence of his own guilt, his position sensibly and increasingly weakened in popular estimation, that series of disasters, which had formed the burden of God's predicted judgments, now followed in the natural sequence of events. If ever before his return from Geshur Absalom had been a kind of popular hero, his presence in Jerusalem for two years in semi-banishment must have increased the general sympathy."

* The statement that his hair weighed 200 shekels is undoubtedly the error of a scribe who copied the manuscript. The Hebrew letters which stand for 20 and for 200 are similar. It should no doubt be 20 shekels.

5. Absalom's Conspiracy and David's Flight.

CHAPTER XV

1. Absalom steals the hearts of the men of Israel. 1-6.
2. His Conspiracy. 7-12.
3. The Flight of the King. 13-37.

The beautiful prince gradually prepared for the great conspiracy of which we read now and which made of his own father, the Lord's anointed, an exile. Chariots and horses with fifty men to run before him won no doubt the admiration of the people. His evident interest in their welfare, kissing those who sought his presence and advice, endeared him still more to the men of Israel. To this must be added his open words, which must have quickly circulated among the people, "Oh, that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice."

This continued for about four years.* During this time he stole the hearts of the men of Israel. All is now ripe for the great rebellion. He lies to his father about an alleged vow he had made at Geshur. The unsuspecting King said, "Go in peace." So he arose and went to Hebron. The signal is given at which all the tribes of Israel were to say, "Absalom reigneth in Hebron." Then he sent for David's counsellor Ahitophel. He was away from Jerusalem at Giloh, a short distance from Hebron, which would seem that he also was in league with Absalom. Ahitophel ("the brother of folly") was the grandfather of Bath-sheba. As his name so was his deed in joining the revolution, through which he may have thought of avenging the shame which had been put upon his family by David's sin.

When David hears the news he said to his servants who

* "Forty" is incorrect. Ancient versions have "four years" which we take is the correct number. Others have suggested that the 40 years should be reckoned from David's anointing. (1 Sam. xvi:13.) This, however, is unlikely.

were with him in Jerusalem, "Arise and let us flee." Fear now takes hold on him. He feared for himself and for his city. Yet he passed through the deepest soul-exercise and clung to the Lord in all the chastisement which followed, stroke after stroke, upon him. The third Psalm gives the culmination of this. It bears the inscription, "A Psalm of David when he fled from Absalom his son." In spite of his fears he trusted the Lord. "But Thou, oh Lord, art a shield for me; my glory and the lifter up of mine head." (Ps. iii:3.) It is claimed that Psalm xli also refers to this period of his life. If that is correct then David was sick at the time of Absalom's rebellion. Verse 9 in that Psalm would have a meaning in connection with Ahitophel, the traitor. John xiii:18 makes it clear that Judas Iscariot is predicted; but Ahitophel is a type of Judas, like him he was a suicide. Another Psalm which was probably written during the rebellion of Absalom and which speaks of Ahitophel's treachery is Psalm lv. The King and his household left the city and all the people after him. All the Cherethites and Pelethites ("executioners and runners") and six hundred which came after him from Gath accompanied the King. And not all was bitterness. Ittai ("with Jehovah") the Gittite, and his devotion to the King, must have greatly comforted David's heart. He was a stranger and an exile, who had come but yesterday to David. He told him to return to abide with the King (that is Absalom). Beautiful is his answer, which strongly reminds us of the blessed words of Ruth, the Moabitess. (Ruth i:16.) What noble purpose he expresses! He wants to be with the King in life or in death. Grace has linked us even closer with our Lord. Ittai in his devotion and attachment to the King is a blessed type of those who are true to the Lord in the days of His rejection.

And there was much weeping as David passed over Kidron. Our Lord passed over that brook also to enter the garden (John xviii:1) where He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears. The ark had been carried along, but now the King directed Zadok to

carry it back to the city. "If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, He will bring me again, and show me both it and his habitation." Beautiful it is to see that in all his great sorrow, conscious that it was the hand of the Lord which chastised him, in all his affliction he does not forget the Lord. He trusts in His mercy. Deep submission breathe in these words.

What a sight the weeping King, barefooted, his head covered, ascending Olivet! A type of Him who also ascended Olivet and wept. (Luke xix:41.) Then Hushai ("hasty") met David. Alas! for the evidence of unbelief in the King, in planning to have Hushai return to the city and feign friendship for Absalom so as to defeat the counsel of Ahitophel.

6. The Sorrows and Testings of the King.

CHAPTER XVI

1. Lying Ziba. 1-4.
2. Shimei curses and stones David. 5-14.
3. Absalom enters Jerusalem. 15-19.
4. Ahitophel's wicked counsel. 20-23.

Ziba in great craftiness meets the exiled King with provisions and acts as the false accuser of Mephibosheth. And David hastily puts all that belongs to Mephibosheth into his hands. Strange that David could believe in the falsehood of Ziba. How could one who was a helpless cripple aspire to possess a kingdom? Mephibosheth had been deceived (xix:25) by Ziba and David readily believed the lying story.

Shimei ("my fame") appeared, cursing David, stoning him and his servants. His accusation that he was responsible for "all the blood of the house of Saul" was unfounded and unjust. He was not responsible for the death of Saul and Jonathan, and equally guiltless of the death of Abner and Ishbosheth. And yet David saw something else in the curses of Shimei and in calling him a bloody man. The blood of Uriah which he had shed must have suddenly

come to his mind. And when Abishai offers to kill Shimei, David rebuked him. (See Luke ix:52-56.) "Let him curse, because the Lord hath said to him, Curse David"—"Let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him." He realizes Shimei is but an instrument in the Lord's hands; He had permitted it and David acknowledges thus that he had deserved the curses. "It may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day." His eyes now look to the Lord whose chastening hand rested so heavily upon him.

Absalom is now in Jerusalem and Hushai succeeds in his commission given to him by David. He deceives Absalom. Whom did Hushai mean, when he said, "Whom the Lord and this people, and all the men of Israel choose, his will I be, and with him will I be"? They can only be applied to David; most likely in his heart he meant David. But it was flattery which wicked Absalom gladly accepted. Absalom followed the vile counsel of Ahitophel and committed the unnatural crime to show to all Israel that the breach between him and his father David was beyond remedy. God's predicted judgment upon David had come literally true. (See chapter xii:11-12.) The world will yet find out that God's judgments, though long delayed, will find ultimately their literal fulfilment.

7. Absalom, Ahitophel and Hushai.

CHAPTER XVII

1. The counsel of Ahitophel and Hushai. 1-14.
2. The counsel made known to David. 15-22
3. Ahitophel commits suicide. 23.
4. Absalom pitched in Gilead. 24-26.
5. The kindness of Shobi, Machir and Barzillai. 27-29.

Ahitophel's counsel was aimed at the person of David only. He wanted to have him killed and thus by the death of the one man bring all Israel back. But Ahitophel had

not reckoned with David's Lord, who loved him and in all the chastisement through which he had to pass, was still his Lord and his Keeper. It was not Hushai who defeated the counsel of Ahitophel, but the Lord. "For the Lord had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahitophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom." Hushai was evidently not present when Ahitophel spoke. When he came to Absalom and asked his opinion he gave a different advice which Absalom and all the men of Israel adopted. The Lord gave the counsel through Hushai and then made Absalom and his men to follow the advice of Hushai. Hushai then communicated with Zadok and Abiathar as David had advised him. We do not follow the interesting story in its details. David heard of the counsel and the uncertainty of Absalom's movement and passed over Jordan into safety. Thus through Hushai's conspiracy, acting as a spy for David, the King had been saved. But would he have been lost if Hushai had not been acting the spy? The Lord would not have forsaken the King and though He used Hushai's counsel yet David was the loser after all. He lost the opportunity of seeing the Lord's power and intervention in his behalf. And how much we also lose by want of faith in Him, with whom nothing is too hard.

Ahitophel seeing his counsel defeated and unable to slay the King set his house in order and committed suicide. As stated before he is a type of Judas Iscariot, the betrayer of our Lord, as Ahitophel was the betrayer of David. Like Ahitophel Judas hanged himself. (Matth. xxvii:5.)

8. The Civil War and Absalom's Death.

CHAPTER XVIII

1. The battle in the forest of Ephraim. 1-8.
2. The Death of Absalom. 9-18.
3. The Tidings of his death and David's grief. 19-33.

And now everything is ready for the battle and the victory. The army of David consisted of three divisions, Joab,

Abishai and the faithful Ittai had the command. David was ready to go forth with his warriors, but the people refused to let him go. What a testimony they gave concerning him! "Thou art worthy ten thousand of us." But of Him, who according to the flesh is the Son of David, we say, "He alone is worthy." The King then stood by the gate of Mahanaim to see the departure of his troops. As his generals Joab, Abishai and Ittai left him he gave them the message, "Deal gently with the young man, even with Absalom." The battle took place in a wild jungle forest, most likely with many steep rocks and gulches. Absalom lost 20,000 men "and the forest (on account of rocks and gulches) devoured more people that day than the sword devoured."

Absalom fled, but his flight was arrested when his head caught in the boughs of an oak, as Josephus states, entangled by his hair. "And he was taken up between the heaven and the earth and the mule that was under him went away." The first one who saw him would not smite him, not for a thousand shekels of silver, for he had heard the King's request. Then Joab, unscrupulous Joab, whose scheme had brought Absalom back into the presence of the King, took three darts (literally "staves") and thrust them through the heart of Absalom while he was yet alive. Most likely the unfortunate rebel son was unconscious through the impact with the tree. The armour bearers made a complete end of him. Joab's deed was unjustifiable in view of the King's command to deal gently with Absalom. Absalom's body was cast into a pit and covered with a very great heap of stones, a criminal's monument. He had looked for a more honorable death, for he had reared a pillar in his lifetime, which he called after his own name, "for he said, I have no son to keep my name in remembrance." Those who claim that the Books of Samuel are a patchwork of a number of writers who made use of different sources, refer us to chapter xiv:27 and point out the discrepancy. But why should there be? Absalom may have

put up this monument before he had any sons, or he may have lost his two sons.

And then comes the record of how the tidings were carried to David. The watchman announces that he recognizeth in the swift runner Ahimaaz the son of Zadok. "And the King said, He is a good man, and cometh with good tidings." All is well—is his message, while the anxious father-heart but paying little attention to the victory won, inquired for the young man Absalom. Cushi the second runner makes his appearance and he carries the tidings of Absalom's death, which he transmits to David in a tender and cautious manner. And then that grief! How pathetic! The weeping King, crying out over and over again: O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

"The conduct of David in reference to his profligate son, is certainly extraordinary, but is not occasioned by weakness of character, which would be inconsistent with the judicial severity with which he banished him from his presence during five years. The shameful and sinful conduct of Absalom may be viewed in two aspects: it exhibits, on the one hand, the operation of the curse which David's sin brought upon his house (2 Sam. xii:10), and the influence of the iniquity of the fathers, which is visited upon the children (Exod. xx:5); it exhibits, on the other hand, Absalom's own degeneracy and profligacy, which fit him to be the bearer of the family-curse. It was not in the latter, but in the former aspect, that David regarded the conduct of Absalom, for his own guilt is so grievous in his eyes, that, in comparison with it, he deems Absalom's wickedness to be inconsiderable. Hence arises the deep and boundless compassion with which he surveys his reprobate son.—David's treatment of Shimei may be regarded in the same light; his consciousness of his own great guilt causes him to overlook the guilt of that criminal." *

* Kurtz-Sacred History.

9. The Return of the King.

CHAPTER XIX

1. The continued grief of the King. 1-8.
2. The Return of the King. 9-16.
3. Mercy shown to Shimei. 17-23.
4. Mephibosheth's joy. 24-30.
5. Barzillai and Chimham. 31-40.
6. Strife between Judah and Israel. 41-43.

What grief must have been David's that "the victory of that day was turned into mourning"? And the people went about on tip-toe, like people ashamed after defeat. A great stillness pervaded everything, only broken by the loud and wailing voice of David: O, my son Absalom, O, Absalom my son, my son! All mourned with him. "But what a man must this David have been to endear himself to his men, that his personal grief became so completely theirs?"

Then Joab acted. He speaks as a wise statesman. It was a bold rebuke, but well deserved, for David's continued mourning was more than weakness; it was selfishness. That he greatly resented the words of condemnation of Joab may be learned from the fact that immediately after he appointed Amasa as commander in chief of his army instead of Joab. The word was also spoken to bring the King back to Jerusalem from his exile and he returned.

Once more Shimei appears upon the scene; he brings with him a thousand men of Benjamin and Ziba also. Shimei fell down before the King and implored his forgiveness. Though Abishai suggested his death, the mercy Shimei craved was readily granted and the King sware unto him. But the mercy shown was at the expense of righteousness. The ultimate fate of Shimei we shall find recorded in 1 Kings ii.

Mephibosheth appears next with undressed feet, untrimmed hair and unwashed clothes; he had been thus

since the flight of the King. Ziba's deception practised on the King is now discovered. But David's conduct towards lame Mephibosheth cannot be justified. The impatience David showed when Mephibosheth speaks is proof that he felt guilty at the rash word he spoke to Ziba. Then he tells Mephibosheth that he and Ziba should divide the land. This was injustice. The deception of Ziba had deserved punishment. Beautiful is Mephibosheth's answer. It shows a love and devotion which is almost unsurpassed in the Bible. "Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the King is come again in peace to his own house." It was a sweet echo of Jonathan's love for David. It hardly needs to be pointed out that in all this David still acts as a natural man and not as guided by Jehovah and His Spirit. His object was to make himself still more attractive with the people and conciliate the different factions. If he had acted in faith, remembering that the Lord had called him into the Kingdom and that He was able to keep him, he would not have tried to gain his end by such means. The bright picture in this chapter is aged and unselfish Barzillai. And the strife between Judah and Israel on account of the King is the first indication of the great division and the internal strifes, which many years later broke out among the people. Thus failure is seen on all sides.

10. The Revolt of Sheba.

CHAPTER XX

1. Sheba's Revolt. 1-2.
2. The ten Concubines shut up. 3.
3. Amasa's failure. 4-6.
5. Joab and the death of Amasa. 7-13.
5. Joab, the wise woman and the death of Sheba. 14-22.
6. David's officials. 23-26.

The final revolt in David's reign was headed by a wicked man, whose name was Sheba. Israel sided with him, probably as the result of the dissension recorded at the close of

the previous chapter. Judah remained loyal to David. The act of David in shutting up unto the day of their death the ten concubines to live in widowhood was necessitated on account of what had taken place. (Chap. xvi:21.) Amasa being now the leader of the hosts of David (chapter xix:13) is called to subdue the revolt; but he proves a failure and could not mobilize the army. Abishai is commissioned then and with him is also Joab. All the mighty men, including the executioners and runners (Cherethites and Pelethites) pursued after Sheba. Then Amasa appeared on the scene. Joab was girded around his loins with a sword which was in the scabbard and the sword fell out. Joab picked up the sword but Amasa did not see the sword in his hand. Then Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand, while he held the sword in his left. Then he smote Amasa deliberately so that he died. He might have lied himself out of the accusation that he murdered Amasa by saying he fell into the sword and that it was an accident. But 1 Kings ii:32 gives the reckoning with unscrupulous Joab for the innocent blood he had shed. Jealousy had led Joab to murder Amasa. And Sheba was killed in Abel, the city in which he sought shelter. On the advice of the woman mentioned in the story, he was beheaded. The revolt ended.

IV. The Appendix to the History of David

Chapter xxi-xxiv

1. The Famines and the Wars with the Philistines.

CHAPTER XXI

1. The Famine and the Gibeonites. 1-14.
2. The Wars with the Philistines. 15-22.

The fourth section of the second Book of Samuel is an appendix to the history of David. When the great famine happened in the days of David we do not know. After the famine had returned year after year, for three years, David inquired of the Lord. Why did he not inquire in the first year? It is an evidence of the low spiritual state which prevailed at that time. The answer which David received revealed the cause of the judgment which rested upon the land. It was Saul and the blood-guilt in having slain the Gibeonites. The story of the Gibeonites is recorded in Joshua ix. They got in among Israel through deception and Joshua had made peace and a league with them. Though they belonged to the nations doomed to death they were permitted to live and became the hewers of wood and the drawers of water. (Josh. ix:26-27.) Jehovah's name and an oath assured them of their safety. Saul had violated this covenant and slain some of them. This wrong is now to be righted. David did not inquire again of the Lord what he should do but consulted the Gibeonites instead. And the Gibeonites demand not silver nor gold of Saul and of his house, "neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel." After that they asked that seven men of his sons be delivered unto them and they would

hang them up unto the Lord in Gibeah. And again in haste the King promised to do so. Their demand, though piously worded, was not according to the Law of God. Children were not to be put to death for the sins of their fathers. (Deut. xxiv:16.) Saul was the guilty one and he had died. How atonement for the broken covenant and the blood guilt was to be made remained for the Lord to say. David, not asking direction from Him, but turning to the Gibeonites, had failed again. And the Gibeonites in their awful demand shared the bloodthirsty cruel character of the Canaanites. David carried out the awful request. He spared Mephibosheth. Two sons of Rizpah, a concubine of Saul, and five sons of Merab,* Saul's eldest daughter, are the victims. They were hanged by the Gibeonites and then left hanging. Sad it is to think that the horrible deed might have been averted if but David had again turned to the Lord and inquired of Him. And another law is broken, when these bodies were kept hanging for months. "And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree. His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day." Surely the Lord could not sanction the deed so opposite to His own law. One of the most terrible scenes recorded in the Bible follows. Rizpah, the concubine of Saul, watched by her dead from April till fall, when it began to rain again. Six months she abode there, the only resting place the coarse sackcloth, above her the putrifying corpses of the seven men, including her two sons. While the hot oriental summer lasted she kept her awful watch and chased away by day the screeching birds of prey, while her nights were disturbed by the hungry howls of wolves and jackals. Could there be a more pathetic picture! And she gained something by it. When David hears of it he is stirred to action. The bones of Saul and Jonathan and the seven men who had been hanged were buried. And after that

* Michal in the Authorized Version is incorrect.

God was entreated for the land. It seems then that David turned to God and He was favorable to the land.

In the record of the battles with the Philistines four giants are mentioned. They represent the power of darkness, which the people of God must overcome.*

2. David's Song of Deliverance.

CHAPTER XXII

1. The Praise of Jehovah. 1-4.
2. The Sorrows of the Past. 5-7.
3. God's Presence and Intervention. 8-20.
4. Reward and Approval. 21-28.
5. The Judgment of the Enemies. 29-43.
6. The exaltation above the adversaries. 44-49.
7. The Praise of Jehovah. 50-51.

It would take many pages to give an exposition of this great song which in the Book of Psalms, with a few changes, is known as Psalm xviii. He uttered these words through the Spirit of the Lord. "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me and His word was in my tongue." (Chapter xxiii:2.) It is therefore a great prophetic utterance. The song takes us beyond David and his experience. His sufferings and deliverances are indicated, but they are but prophetic of Him, whose sufferings and whose victory are foreshadowed in David's life and experience. The great deliverance psalm includes therefore prophetically the story of David's greater Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. In verses 5-7 we have David's suffering when an exile, persecuted by Saul; prophetically the suffering of Christ, who was compassed by the waves of death and who was plunged beneath these dark waves and saved out of death. Verses 8-20 describe the intervention. Nothing in the life of David could be made to fit this; but being a prophetic utterance there is no difficulty to trace here the resurrection of Christ, who

* For a full typical application we refer the reader to the Numerical Bible.

was brought forth into a large place (verse 20). "He delivered me, for He delighted in Me" can only be truthfully applied to Christ. And all looks forward to a still greater intervention and manifestation of God. Verses 21-28 equally can only be true of our Lord. "For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God." It is impossible to say that David spoke of himself. The history we have traced gives a far different story. But every word is true if we think of David's Son, our Lord. And the judgment and exaltation described in the closing stanzas of this song will be realized in Him into whose hands the Father has committed all judgment. He will be "the head of the nations" and a people will serve Him. (Verse 44-45.) That David had before his heart the great covenant-promise (chapter vii) and that his vision was enlarged so that he beheld "His Anointed" and His coming manifestation and kingdom becomes sufficiently clear in the last two verses of the song.

3. The Last Words of David and the Record of the Mighty Men.

CHAPTER XXIII

1. His last Words. 1-7.
2. The names and records of David's mighty men. 8-39.

In his last words an even greater and clearer vision is given to King David. "If Psalm xviii was a grand Hallelujah, with which David quitted the scene of life, these 'his last words' are the Divine attestation of all that he had sung and prophesied in the Psalms concerning the spiritual import of the kingdom which he was to found in accordance with the divine message that Nathan had been commissioned to bring to him. Hence these 'last words' must be regarded as an inspired prophetic utterance by David, before his death, about the King and Kingdom of God in their full and real meaning."* And this King is Christ and the

* History of Judah and Israel.

Kingdom that which will be set up with the second coming of Christ. As the translation in the authorized version is weak we give here a corrected translation:

"David the son of Jesse saith,
And the man who was raised on high saith,
The anointed of the God of Jacob,
And the sweet Psalmist in Israel:
The Spirit of the Lord spake by me,
And His word was on my tongue.
The God of Israel said,
The Rock of Israel spake to me:
A righteous ruler over men.
A Ruler in the fear of God,
Like the light of the morning when the sun riseth,
A morning without clouds;
When the tender grass cometh forth out of the earth,
Through the clear shining after the rain.
But my house is not so with God.
Yet He has made me an everlasting covenant
Ordered in all and sure;
For this is all my salvation—all my delight,
Although He maketh it not to grow.
But the wicked shall be all of them as thorns thrust away,
For they cannot be taken with the hand;
And the man that toucheth them,
Must have iron and the staff of a spear
And they shall be utterly burned with fire in their dwelling.

Little comment is needed; just a little help to open up the words of the dying King. The righteous ruler over men, a ruler in the fear of God is our Lord. Thus He will yet rule over the earth in righteousness. And when He comes to rule, there cometh the morning without clouds when the earth will be refreshed, through the clear shining, the brightness of His glory, after the rain; after judgment is passed. Then David confesseth that his house it not so with God. His hope, his salvation, all his delight is in the covenant made with him; it centers in the fulfilment of the Davidic covenant. And the wicked will suffer the fire of His wrath.

In blessed keeping with this last great prophetic utterance

of the King are the records and the names of the mighty men of David. They were the men who loved David, stood by him, showed their loyalty and devotion to the King. And others are given, of whom we read no definite deeds. The last name is Uriah the Hittite. The spiritual meaning is not hard to find. Before the judgment seat of Christ all will be made manifest. When He comes to be the righteous Ruler, to usher in the morning without clouds, those will be remembered who were loyal and devoted to Him in His rejection. No name and no deed, even the smallest, will then be forgotten. What an incentive this should be, especially in the solemn days in which we live, when we see the day approaching, to serve Him and be as devoted to our absent, but coming Lord, as David's mighty men were to Him. In our annotation on 1 Chronicles where we find these records also we hope to point out some of the details of the deeds of David's mighty men. (1 Chronicles xi.)

4. David's Failure; the Altar on the Threshing Floor of Araunah.

CHAPTER XXIV

1. The numbering of the People. 1-9.
2. The Sin acknowledged and Gad's message. 10-14.
3. The Pestilence. 15-17.
4. The Altar on the threshing-floor of Araunah. 18-25.

The final chapter of the books of Samuel is of much interest and importance. "And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah." In 1 Chronicles xxi:1 we read "And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel." This has often been pointed out as a discrepancy and contradiction. Criticism has explained it in the following way: "Of surpassing interest for the study of the progressiveness of revelation in the Old Testament period is the form which the chronicler has given to this verse. To his more devel-

oped religious sense the idea was abhorrent that God could be subject to moods, and incite men to a course of action for which He afterwards calls them to account. Accordingly he writes: And Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel." There is no contradiction here nor do the two accounts need an explanation as the above. Israel had committed some sin which brought upon them the displeasure of Jehovah. Satan the accuser was then permitted to influence David. The statement, "He (God) moved David," also means in Hebrew, "He suffered him to be moved." He permitted Satan to do His work. In 1 Tim. iii:6 we read that pride is the condemnation (or as it is literally "the crime") of the devil. And Satan the accuser moves David with national pride to number the people. It is significant that preceding this record are the names and achievements of the mighty men of David. No doubt his heart swelled with much elation over his victories and great achievements. While David's eyes were blinded by Satan, Joab saw the danger. In 1 Chron. xiii:3 we read that he said to David: "The Lord make his people an hundred times so many more as they be; but, my Lord the King, are they not all my Lord's servants? Why doth my Lord require this thing? Why will he be a cause of guilt to Israel?" The King's word prevailed and reluctantly Joab and the captains went forth to carry out the King's command. It was altogether a military census. But the census was not completed. (1 Chronicles xxvii:24.)

David's heart then smote him and we see him coming to the Lord and confessing his sin. "I have sinned greatly in that I have done; and now I beseech thee, Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly." It was a true confession he made that night. Then the Lord sent the answer through the prophet Gad. The Lord leaves the choice to David. Either three years of famine,* three months of flight or three days of pestilence. And here the man of faith asserts himself. "Let

* This is according to I Chron xxi:12; 2 Sam. xxiv:13 seven years, which must be the error of some copyist.

us now fall into the hand of the Lord; for His mercies are great, and let me not fall into the hand of man." And the Lord did not disappoint his servant's faith in His mercy. When the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it the Lord said, It is enough; stay now thine hand. And the angel of the Lord, the same who appeared to the patriarchs, to Moses, Joshua and others, was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. Once more David's voice is heard in confession. "I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done? Let Thy hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house." He was willing to be the one sufferer for his people; in this he is a type again of our Lord, the sin-bearer. He is commanded to rear an altar upon the threshing-floor of Araunah. "It was a fitting spot for mercy upon Israel, this place where of old faithful Abraham had been ready to offer his only son unto God; fitting also as still outside the city; but chiefly in order that the pardoning and sparing mercy now shown, might indicate the site where, on the great altar of burnt-offering, abundant mercy in pardon and acceptance would in the future be dispensed to Israel."* It was the place upon which the temple was built. (1 Chron. xxi:28-xxii:1.) And Araunah the Jebusite offered willing the threshing floor and the sacrificial animals. But David would not consent. "Neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing." For fifty shekels of silver he bought the oxen and the threshing floor. Then the burnt offerings and peace offerings ascended unto Jehovah as a sweet savour. And Jehovah answered by fire. (1 Chron. xxi:26.) And David before that altar, who buys and offers, thus meeting the claim of God, is a type of our Lord who bought us with the great price and offered Himself. And even so as this book closes with the Lord being merciful to His land and people, the plague stayed, so will Israel in the future receive and enjoy His mercy. It will be the result of the one sacrifice.

* Edersheim.

FIRST KINGS

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The Book of Kings

Introduction

In the introduction to the books of Samuel we stated that the first and second books of Kings are called in the Greek version of the Old Testament the third and fourth books of Kingdoms and in the Latin version the third and fourth books of Kings. The two books, which were originally undivided and formed one book, contain the history of Israel under the government of Kings. The same period of history is also covered in the two books of Chronicles. However there is a great difference between the books of Kings and the books of Chronicles. The books of Kings were written before the captivity; the books of Chronicles after that event. (1 Chron. vi:15.) The books of Kings trace the history of the Kings from the prophetic viewpoint; the books of Chronicles from the priestly. Kings gives the history from a human point of view, Chronicles from the divine standpoint. After Solomon's wonderful reign and the division of the Kingdom the history of the Kings of Israel is mostly given while much less is said of the Kings of Judah. The books of Chronicles are characterized by an almost entire absence of the history of the Kings of Israel; they are mentioned only in case of absolute necessity. After the genealogical tracings the history of the Kingdom of David is followed in detail down to the Babylonian captivity. The blessing and grace of God as manifested towards the house of David is beautifully given in Chronicles. The story centers around the Temple. In the introduction to Chronicles and more so in the annotations we shall point out more fully these interesting and striking differences, the blessed marks of inspiration.

THE AUTHORSHIP OF KINGS

Much has been written on the possible instrument who was used in putting these records together as we have them now. Critics have much to say on the different compilers, redactors, editors, etc., who all had a hand in putting these histories together. They speak of proximate sources and primary sources and later additions and redactions. To say the least it is bewildering and unprofitable to follow, what they term, their scientific method. That the author of these two books had certain sources or documents, besides tradi-

tional accounts at his disposal, cannot be denied. But we maintain that he was chosen by the Lord to write these records of the Kings and was guided by the Holy Spirit as he wrote. The books of Kings have the mark in every way of being the work of one person and not a number of persons, followed by others who edited their writings. Unity of style can be clearly followed throughout the books; there is a uniform mode of expression which would be quite impossible with a number of authors or compilers. See and compare 1 Kings xxii:43 with 2 Kings xiv:3–4; 1 Kings xii:31 with 2 Kings xvii:32; 1 Kings xi:43 with 2 Kings xiii:13. Jewish tradition declares that the Prophet Jeremiah was the instrument chosen to write the two books of Kings. While no one can say with certainty that this is true, much is in favor of this view. There is a striking similarity of style and idiom between the language of Kings and the language employed by Jeremiah. Perhaps no one was better fitted to write the wonderful history of Solomon's failure, the division of the Kingdom, the apostasy of Israel, the chastisements of the Lord, than the prophet of tears, the man of God whose loving messages were to a backslidden Israel.

SPIRITUAL AND PROPHETIC TRUTHS

There is much spiritual and prophetic truth to be found in these records. Solomon's wonderful reign, and the building of the house of the Lord contains great foreshadowings of the coming Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Solomon's reign of peace marks the climax of the history of Israel. In him the promise made unto David (2 Sam. vii) found its first fulfillment. As head over the people, as king of righteousness ruling in righteousness, as King of peace, exercising also priestly functions, furthermore, in taking Pharaoh's daughter and the Gentiles seeking after him and much else he is a type of the coming King in whom the covenant promises made to David will be fully realized. There are many spiritual lessons to be found in the decline among Israel. Elijah's and Elisha's ministries, their messages and miracles, have a deeper prophetic and spiritual meaning. To write a large volume on these two great historical books and trace in them God's way in government as well as the prophetic foreshadowings would be a far easier work than to condense them in brief annotations. However we hope and pray that even these few hints we could give will be used by our Lord to help His people into a better knowledge of His Word. The chronological table of the Kings of Judah and Israel, and of contemporary events, which follows this introduction should be freely consulted in the study of the text.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

OF THE KINGS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL, AND OF CONTEMPORARY EVENTS.

According to Keil, Winer, Clinton, and Usher.

Year from the Separation of the Two Kingdoms.	Kings of Judah. Reigned:	Year from the Accession of the Kings of Judah.	Kings of Israel Reigned:	Year from the Accession of the Kings of Israel.	Contemporary Events.	Date before Christ. Keil.	Winer.	Clinton.	Usher.
1	Rehoboam, 17 years	1st	Jeroboam, 22 years	1st.	Shishak King of Egypt	975	975	976	975
					Shishak enters Jerusalem	971	970		
18	Abijam, 3 years			18th		957	957	959	958
20	Asa, 41 years			20th		955	955	956	955
22		2nd	Nadab, 2 years			953	954	955	954
23		3rd	Baasha, 24 years			952	953	954	953
					Zerah the Ethiopian	940			
					Bed-Hadad. I of Syria	939			
45		26th	Elah, 2 years			930	930	930	930
46		27th	Zimri, 7 days			929	928	930	929
46		27th	Omri, and Tibni, 4 years			929	928	930	929
50		31st	Omri, sole king 8 years			925	924		
					Building of Samaria	924	923		
57		38th	Ahab, 22 years		Ethbaal, King of Tyre and Sidon				
61	Jehoshaphat, 25 years			4th		918	918	919	918
						914	914	915	914
					Ben-Hadad II of Syria				
					Battle of Ramoth-gilead	897	897		
78		17th	Ahaziah, 2 years			897	897	896	898
79		18th	Jehoram, 12 years			896	896	895	896
					War of Israel and Judah against Moab (Moabite Stone)				
	Jehoram, co-regent for 2 years?			5th		891			
86	Jehoram, sole ruler 6 years					889	889	891	892
				12th		884	885	884	885
91	Ahaziah, 1 year				Hazael, King of Syria				
					Second Battle of Ramoth-gilead				

Year from the Separation of the Two Kingdoms.	Kings of Judah. Reigned:	Year from the Accession of the Kings of Judah.	Kings of Israel Reigned:	Year from the Accession of the Kings of Israel.	Contemporary Events.	Date before Christ. Keil.	Winer.	Clinton.	Usher.
92	Athaliah, 6 years		Jehu, 28 years		Murder of Ahaziah and Jehoram by Jehu.	883	884	883	884
					Lycurgus in Sparta, 884				
98	Joash, 40 years			7th	Athaliah slain	877	878	877	878
					Pygmalion, King of Tyre. His sister Dido founds Carthage, 143 years after the building of the Temple				
						856	856	855	856
119		22nd?	Jehoahaz, 17 years		Judah invaded and Jerusalem threatened by the Syrians	840	840	839	841
135		37th	Joash, 16 years		Ben-Hadad III, King of Syria				
137	Amaziah, 29 years			2nd	Joash, King of Judah, murdered	838	838	837	839
					War of Amaziah against Edom				
					Attack of Moab upon Israel				
					War between Judah and Israel				
151		15th	Jeroboam II, 41 years		Jerusalem occupied by the Israelites	824	825	823	825
					Successful War of Israel against Syria				
165	Uzziam, 52 years			15th?	Ammon becomes tributary to Judah	810	809	808	810
					The Philistines humbled				
192			Death of Jeroboam II, Interregnum for 11 years			783	784		
203		38th	Zachariah, 6 months		First year of the Olympiads, 776	772	772	771	773
204		39th	Shallum, 1 month			771	771	770	772
204		39th	Menahem, 10 years			771	771	770	772
					Pul, King of Assyria				
					Israel becomes tributary to Assyria				
215		50th	Pekahiah, 2 years			760	760	759	761
216		52nd	Pekah, 20 years		Murder of Pekahiah	759	758	757	759
217	Jotham, 16 years			2nd		758	758	756	758
					Building of Rome, 753				
					Nabonassar, King of Babylon, 747				
					Rezin, King of Syria				
233	Ahaz, 16 years			17th		742	741	741	742
					Ahaz invokes the help of Assyria against Syria and Israel				

Year from the Separation of the Two Kingdoms.	Kings of Israel Reigned:	Year from the Accession of the Kings of Judah.	Kings of Israel Reigned:	Year from the Accession of the Kings of Israel.	Contemporary Events.	Date before Christ. Keil.	Winer.	Clinton.	Usher.
					Tiglath-pileser, King of Assyria				
					The Assyrians occupy the land east of the Jordan, and the north of Palestine, and lead the people captive				
					The Philistines conquer the western part of Judah				
236		4th	Pekah murdered. Interregnum 8½ years?			739	738		
					So, King of Egypt	730	729	730	730
245		12th	Hoshea, 9 years, tributary to Assyria		Shalmaneser, King of Assyria (Media and Babylonia.) Growth of the Assyrian Empire in Asia	727	725	726	726
248	Hezekiah, 29 years			3rd	Attempt of Hoshea to rebel against Assyria. Invasion of the Assyrians. Siege of Samaria				
253		6th	Destruction of the Commonwealth of Israel		Deportation of the Ten Tribes	722	721	721	721
					Sargon, King of Assyria. Siege of Ashdod (Isa. xx. 1)				
					Alliance between Judah and Egypt				
261					Siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib	714	712		
					War between Sennacherib and Tirhakah				
					Destruction of the Assyrians by "the Angel of the Lord"				
					Embassy from Merodach-baladan				
277	Manasseh, 55 years					698	696	697	698
					Esarhaddon, King of Assyria, sends fresh Colonists to Samaria				
332	Amon, 2 years				Scythian hordes pass through Palestine (Herod. I, 104, etc.)	643	641	642	643
334	Josiah, 31 years				Murder of Amon	641	639	640	641
					Nabopolassar, founder of the Babylonian Temple, father of Nebuchadnezzar	626	625		
					Draco in Athens				

Year from the Separation of the Two Kingdoms.	Kings of Judah. Reigned:	Year from the Accession of the Kings of Judah.	Kings of Israel Reigned:	Year from the Accession of the Kings of Israel.	Contemporary Events.	Date before Christ. Keil.	Winer.	Clinton.	Usher.
					Invasion of Assyria by Egypt. Alliance of Assyria and Judah. Victory of Megiddo by Pharaoh-nechoh, Josiah slain	610	609		
365	Jehoahaz, 3 months					610	609	609	610
365	Jehoiakim, 11 years				Jehoiakim put on the throne by the King of Egypt. Judah subject to Egypt	610	609	609	610
369	Commencement of the Exile				The Egyptians beaten by the Chaldees in the Battle of Carchemish. Taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar	606	606		607
376	Jehoiachin, 3 months				Second Conquest of Jerusalem and Deportation. Jerusalem and the Temple plundered by the Chaldees	599	598	598	599
376	Zedekiah, 11 years				Zedekiah made king by the Chaldees	599	598	598	599
					Zedekiah rebels against Nebuchadnezzar, and turns towards Pharaoh-hophra, King of Egypt (Jer. xliv. 30; Ezek. xvii. 15). Jerusalem besieged. Attempted relief of Jerusalem by the Egyptians (Jer. xxxvii, 5, etc.; Ezek. xvii. 17, etc.)		590		
387	Destruction of Jerusalem								
387	Gedaliah Babylonian Governor in Judia, 2 months				Death of Zedekiah. Majority of the Jews carried to Babylon (3rd deportation)	588	588	587	588
391	Last Deportation of the Jews to Babylon (Jos. *Ant.* x. 97; comp. Jer. lii. 30?)				Gedaliah murdered. Many of the Jews retire into Egypt	588	588		
						584	584		

Judah lies desolate (2 Chron. xxxvi. 21; Zech. vii. 14). Occupation of part of the country by the Philistines and Edomites. The latter take the southern territory (Ezek. xxxv. 10). Hebron part of Idumea (Jos. *Jew. Wars*, iv. 9, 7).

The Division of the First Book of Kings

The First Book of Kings contains the record of the reign of Solomon and the glory of his great Kingdom of peace. But that glory soon passed away through the failure of Solomon and the great united Kingdom becomes a divided Kingdom. In the last six chapters we read of Elijah, the Tishbite, the great Prophet of God and his activity during the reign of wicked Ahab. We make the following division:

I. **DAVID'S LAST DAYS AND THE CROWNING OF SOLOMON.** Chapter i-ii:11.
   1. **Adonijah's exaltation to be King.** Chapter i:1-27.
   2. **The Crowning of Solomon; Adonijah's submission.** Chapter i:28-53.
   3. **David's charge to Solomon; David's End.** Chapter ii:1-11.

II. **SOLOMON'S GLORIOUS REIGN. HIS FAILURE AND END.** Chapter ii:12—xi.
   1. **The righteous judgment of Solomon.** Chapter ii:12-46.
   2. **Jehovah appears to Solomon; His Prayer and the Answer.** Chapter iii.
   3. **Solomon's Princes and Officers. The prosperous Kingdom and the King's great Wisdom.** Chapter iv.
   4. **The building of the Temple and its Dedication.** Chapter v-viii.

5. **Jehovah appears unto Solomon. The Greatness of the King.** Chapter ix.
6. **Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. His great riches and splendour.** Chapter x.
7. **Solomon's failure. Judgment announced and the beginning of the disruption.** Chapter xi.

III. **THE DIVIDED KINGDOM.** Chapter xii-xvi.

1. **Rehoboam and the Revolt of the ten tribes.** Chapter xii.
2. **Jeroboam and Rehoboam and their reign.** Chapters xiii-xiv.
3. **Abijam and Asa. Kings of Judah.** Chapter xv:1-24.
4. **Kings of Israel.** Chapter xv:25—xvi.

IV. **THE PROPHET ELIJAH AND KING AHAB.** Chapter xvii-xxii.

1. **Elijah's Prediction. His Miracles.** Chapter xvii.
2. **Elijah on Mount Carmel. The answered Prayer.** Chapter xviii.
3. **Elijah in the Wilderness and on Mount Horeb.** Chapter xix.
4. **King Ahab, his wicked reign and Downfall.** Chapter xx-xxii.

Analysis and Annotations

I. David's Last Days and the Crowning of Solomon

Chapter i-ii:11

1. Adonijah's exaltation to be King.

CHAPTER I:1-27

1. David's Decrepitude. 1–4.
2. Adonijah's Self-exaltation. 5–9.
3. The Plot of Nathan and Bath-sheba. 10–14.
4. Bath-sheba and Nathan before the King. 15–27.

David was about 70 years old and extremely feeble. The strenuous life he had led, the exposures and hardships of his youth, the cares and anxieties of his reign, and the chastenings through which he passed on account of his great sin, and much else was responsible for this enfeebled condition. It is but another illustration of that rigid law, What a man soweth that shall he reap. It was a premature decay with the complete loss of natural heat. While the King was in this helpless condition Adonijah ("My Lord is Jehovah") exalted himself to be King and like his unhappy brother Absalom he prepared chariots and horsemen and fifty men to run before him. Like Absalom he also was of great physical beauty. There is a significant sentence which reveals the weakness of David towards his favorite children, a weakness which has borne its sad fruits in many families. "And his father had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so?" There had been no discipline in David's family; he had spared the rod. By right of primogeniture he thought of claiming the

throne. However, he must have known that his younger brother Solomon had been selected by David to fill the throne after him. But Adonijah knew not the Lord nor was he subject to His will. In his selfish ambition he was upheld by Joab and Abiathar, the priest. No doubt but both of these men sought their own interests; Joab to continue in his position he held with David; Abiathar to get supremacy over Zadok his rival in the priesthood. But Zadok the priest, who ministered at Gibeon (1 Chron. xvi:39), Benaiah, who had charge of the Cherethites and Pelethites * (2 Sam. viii:18), Nathan, the faithful prophet, Shimei (not the one who cursed David), Rei and David's mighty men kept aloof from the revolt. They remained true to Jehovah and to His anointed. Then Adonijah made a sacrificial feast to give his self exaltation a religious air. He invited all the King's sons, his brethren, and the men of Judah; but Nathan, Benaiah, David's mighty men and his brother Solomon were not called. It was meant to be his coronation. In this revolt, preceding the enthronement of God's King, Solomon the King of peace, we have another foreshadowing of what will precede the reign of the Prince of Peace, our Lord. It seemed as if Adonijah might succeed. But Nathan, the prophet, begins to act. In agreement with the mother of Solomon the plan is made to discover what Adonijah had done to the aged King. Bathsheba goes in first and after a while Nathan appeared to tell the King the same story he had heard from the lips of his wife. She reminded David of his oath, that Solomon her son was to be the successor to the throne, and after telling him of Adonijah's act, she appealed to him to proclaim now who was to sit upon the throne. She speaks to him repeatedly as "My lord the King." And when Nathan appeared before David he also said, "My lord O King." Some have gathered from this that aged David had become filled with the pride of life. However, the honour done to him may have been true reverence for the Lord's anointed King.

* Executioners and runners.

2. The Anointing of Solomon; Adonijah's Submission.

CHAPTER I:28-53

1. The renewed promise to Bath-sheba. 28–31.
2. The anointing of Solomon commanded. 32–37.
3. Solomon made King. 38–40.
4. The Consternation of Adonijah. 41–49.
5. Adonijah's fear and submission. 50–53.

Bath-sheba had withdrawn while Nathan was before the King. She is called back and David once more assures her that Solomon her son should reign after him. Then David commands that Solomon be anointed King without further delay. His instructions are at once carried out. Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet and Benaiah caused Solomon to ride upon King David's mule and brought him to Gihon. The priest anointed him King and the people rejoiced with great joy. But what joy will come to this earth when He who is greater than Solomon will be enthroned and receive His great Kingdom, which is only faintly foreshadowed in Solomon's glorious reign! All David did was according to Jehovah's will and purpose. Solomon was a mere youth when he was anointed. In 1 Chronicles xxviii and xxix where the most impressive scene is fully described which followed Solomon's anointing, we find David's own words concerning him, "Solomon my son, whom alone God hath chosen is yet young and tender, and the work is great." (1 Chr. xxix:1.) We shall follow the remarkable utterances of King David at that occasion when we reach the Chronicles. Like Saul and David, King Solomon was likewise anointed a second time. "And they made Solomon the son of David King the second time, and anointed him unto the Lord to be the chief governor, and Zadok to be priest." (1 Chronicles xxix:22.) And while the people were rejoicing in Gihon over God's true King, Adonijah's feast was about ended. Abiathar's son Jonathan appeared on the scene. Adonijah said, "Come in; for thou art a valiant man, and bringest good tidings." And the tidings he brought were good

tidings for God's people: "Solomon sitteth on the throne of the Kingdom." Fear and consternation took hold on Adonijah and his guests and while the people gathered around Solomon, Adonijah and his company scattered. When another One, the greater Son of David, is enthroned and the glad tidings flash forth, He has taken His throne, all his enemies will be scattered and be made the footstool of His feet.

Adonijah took hold of the horns of the altar. (Exodus xxi:12-14.) Solomon promises him that his life would be spared, "but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die." Mercy shown and righteousness demanded were the first acts of King Solomon. In this he is a type of Him who will reign in peace and execute mercy and righteousness on the earth. Righteousness will reign in the millennial Kingdom and evil doers will be cut off.

3. David's charge to Solomon; David's end.

CHAPTER II:1-11

1. David's charge. 1–9.
2. David's end. 10–11.

We call attention again to 1 Chronicles xxviii and xxix where we find the record of the great assembly of all the princes of Israel and David's great address to them. He then made known to all Israel that the Lord had chosen Solomon to occupy the throne. He speaks there of the covenant promise, that his son should build the house of the Lord and His courts. He exhorted the people to keep the commandments and then spoke in tenderest words to young Solomon. "And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind . . . take heed now; for the Lord hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary; be strong and do it." (1 Ch. xxviii:1-10.) Then he gave to his son Solomon the patterns for the Temple. These had been made under the guidance of the Spirit of God. The immense treasures are mentioned which David had dedi-

cated for the Temple worship. Of all this we find nothing in the record of the first book of Kings. Here only the general history of God's government in Israel is given from the prophetic point of view. What Chronicles represents we shall state in our annotations on those books.

The charge of David to Solomon recorded in the opening verses of this chapter was given privately. Its main purpose was to exhort his son to punish Joab and Shimei and to show kindness unto the sons of Barzillai. Critics have attacked David's character on account of this charge. Renan in his history of the people Israel goes so far as to say that the incident is "a revelation of the black perfidy of his hypocritical soul." However, the charge to Solomon to execute vengeance upon these two men is not a stain upon King David. The punishment was well deserved. Joab had killed Abner and Amasa. Shimei had in great vileness cursed God's King. Both were wicked men. David's own guilt had no doubt compelled him to neglect the solemn duty demanded by justice. He therefore asked Solomon to vindicate divine justice and raise it up from the defeat it had sustained by punishing Joab and Shimei with death, while kindness is to be bestowed upon the righteous. From the prophetic view-point we get a glimpse of the coming righteous judgment of the King, our Lord Jesus Christ, who will execute the vengeance of God and punish the evil doers, and reward the righteous in His Kingdom. Then David passed away and was buried after his forty-year reign in the city of David. He died in good old age, full of days, riches and honour. (1 Chron. xxix:28.) His memory was always cherished by the nation. Peter on the day of Pentecost spoke of his burial place: "His sepulchre is with us unto this day." (Acts ii:29.) In the coming day of the glorious manifestation of the Son of Man, who also bears the title Son of David, when He shall receive the throne of His father David, King David in resurrection glory will have a great share in that Kingdom.

II. Solomon's Glorious Reign. His Failure and End

Chapter ii:12-xi.

1. The righteous Judgment of Solomon.

CHAPTER II:12-46

1. Solomon upon the Throne. 12.
2. Adonijah's Request. 13–18.
3. Bath-sheba before Solomon. 19–21.
4. Solomon's answer and sentence upon Adonijah. 22–24.
5. Adonijah executed. 25.
6. Abiathar thrust out. 26–27.
7. Joab and Shimei executed. 28–46.

"Then sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father; and his Kingdom was established greatly." Solomon and his glorious reign foreshadows the reign of that greater Son of David, our Lord, in whom the covenant promise made to David will be fully accomplished. The section which begins with the statement of Solomon's enthronement is deeply interesting and full of the richest typical and prophetic meaning. Solomon's righteous judgments, his wisdom, his reign in peace, but especially the building of the Temple foreshadow Him who will ere long receive the throne and build the temple of the Lord. (Zech. vi:13.) Inasmuch as the critics reject the literal fulfilment of the oath bound Davidic covenant and the prophetic foreshadowing of the recorded events, they also condemn Solomon's righteous judgment which occupies the foreground of his reign. We quote from one of these critics: "The reign of Solomon began with a threefold deed of blood. An Eastern King surrounded by the many princes of a po-

lygamous family, and liable to endless jealousies and plots, is always in a condition of unstable equilibrium; the death of a rival is regarded as his only safe imprisonment.'' * In such statements God's governmental ways in righteousness and retribution are entirely ignored.

Adonijah the wicked rebel on probation visits Bath-sheba. He acknowledges freely that the Lord had given the Kingdom to his brother. Then he desired that Bath-sheba should ask her son Solomon to give Abishag the Shunammite to him as wife. (Chapter i:3.) Bath-sheba was completely won by the pathetic plea of Adonijah and did not discover the wicked plot which was hidden beneath his request. Beautiful is the reverence which Solomon showed to his mother. He arose from his throne, he bowed himself unto her,† and then he made her sit on his right hand. How he honored and loved her! It may foreshadow the love of Him for the believing remnant of Israel, His beloved people, who will have a share in His coming Kingdom. When Bath-sheba states Adonijah's request the keen discernment and wisdom of Solomon are at once apparent. ''And why dost thou ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? ask for him the Kingdom also; for he is mine elder brother; even for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah.'' Adonijah's request was a scheme to obtain the Kingdom. Most likely it was concocted by Abiathar and Joab. To marry a deceased King's wife or concubine was, according to Oriental customs, paramount with claiming the rights of the King. (2 Sam. xii:8; xvi:21-22.) Now Abishag was not the wife of David in the sense of the word, yet she must have been considered as belonging to the departed King. Had Solomon granted the request he would have hopelessly degraded himself in the eyes of the people. (2 Sam. iii:7.) Adonijah aimed by this cunning scheme at the throne of Solomon and attempted to obtain the Kingdom. Then Solomon pronounced judgment, which Adonijah fully deserved. He was put to

* Canon Farrar.

† The Septuagint version reads "he kissed her."

death that day. It has been suggested by certain critics that Solomon had a more selfish, carnal reason for putting his elder brother to death. "If, as seems almost certain," declares a higher critic, "Abishag is the fair Shulamite of the Song of Songs, there can be little doubt that Solomon himself loved her, and that she was the jewel of his seraglio." But there is absolutely no evidence that Abishag is identical with Shulamite; nor does Jewish tradition sustain such a theory. It is a mere supposition.

Abiathar is next dealt with. His life is spared but Solomon thrusts him out of the priesthood, thus fulfilling the word of the Lord concerning the house of Eli. (1 Sam. ii:31-36.) Zadok becomes exclusively priest. (Verse 35.) Joab and Shimei are both executed. Though Joab caught hold of the horns of the altar it did not save him; he paid now by a just retribution for the wicked deeds he had done. Shimei was commanded to remain in Jerusalem; disobedience would mean certain death. When he disobeyed, the sentence of death was executed upon him. And here we have another glimpse of the government of the Kingdom in the coming age. In the present age Grace reigns through righteousness; in the Kingdom age, when the Lord rules over all, righteousness reigns. Disobedience will be swiftly met by judgment as it was with Shimei.

2. Jehovah appears to Solomon; His Prayer and the Answer.

CHAPTER III

1. Affinity with Pharaoh and Pharaoh's daughter. 1.
2. Solomon loved the Lord. 2–4.
3. Jehovah appears to Solomon; his prayer. 5–15.
4. The wisdom granted and exemplified. 16–28.

We shall now see how the Lord kept His promise He made unto David in the establishment of his Kingdom. After the execution of the demanded judgment Solomon entered into affinity with Pharaoh King of Egypt (prob-

ably the last King of the 21 Tanitic dynasty) and married his daughter. She was with him in David's city until he made an end of building his own house, the house of the Lord and the wall of Jerusalem round about. She was a Gentile and Jewish tradition states that she became a Jewish proselyte. This union was prophetic of the blessing Gentiles were to receive in union with Him whom Solomon typifies. It was Grace which took up Pharaoh's daughter and made her share the riches and honors of Solomon.* And Solomon loved the Lord. At Gibeon he offered a thousand burnt-offerings. Gibeon was one of the high places where the priests performed their functions. (1 Chron. xvi:36-40.) The tabernacle and the brazen altar were there, but not the ark of the covenant. However, he also approached the ark and stood before it to render thanks unto Jehovah.

A most blessed incident followed. As stated before Solomon was a youth when he was anointed King. Eusebius states that he was only 12 years old; Josephus gives his age as 15 years. He was probably not yet 20 years old when he became King. He felt deeply two things, his own littleness and his great responsibility in governing the multitude of people. It was while still at Gibeon that Jehovah appeared unto him in a dream and said: "Ask what I shall give you." What Grace this was, but it also searched his innermost soul. And this offer was not made exclusively to Solomon. He who appeared unto Solomon and put this gracious question to him, when He was on earth clothed in the garb of a servant, yet greater than Solomon in all his glory, said: "Ask, and it shall be given you." (Matt. vii:7.) And again He said: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do." (John xiv:13.) It is faith's prerogative to hear Him speak thus to our hearts and to make use of His great offer. Solomon's answer is

* Another application may be made to the Jewish remnant of the end of the age the same way as Ruth typified that remnant. See Annotations on Ruth. That remnant is called through Grace; the Jews through unbelief are in the same place as the Gentiles. The Grace which saved and called the Gentiles will draw and call them and bring them into union with the King.

beautiful. He acknowledged God's great mercy and kindness. Then he confessed his own weakness and helplessness. "I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in." He speaks of his responsibility and duty towards God's people and then utters his request: "Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad, for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?" It pleased the Lord as it always pleases Him when His people confess their littleness and expect help from Him. The request is granted. "So there was none like thee before thee, neither shall any arise like unto thee." Wisdom from above filled his soul. The Book of Proverbs bears witness to this great understanding the Lord gave to him. But he added much more; he gave him riches and honour. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness and all things shall be added unto you." (Matthew vi:33.) And the same Lord does still, to all who put their trust in Him, exceeding abundantly above all they ask or think. "He giveth us richly all things to enjoy." (1 Tim. vi:17.) Then there was a conditional promise. "And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes, and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days." (Verse 14.) Alas! Solomon did not fulfill the condition. He forsook the Lord and died when he was not quite 60 years of age. He awoke and behold it was a dream. But it was more than a dream. That the prayer had been answered and that the wisdom of God was in him to do judgment is evidenced in the incident which follows and which needs no further comment. In his wisdom he is a type of our Lord Jesus who is the wisdom of God. And the justice he administered in his Kingdom is typical of the righteous judgment of our Lord when He rules as King over the earth. "He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears, but with righteousness shall he judge the poor." (Is. xi:1-4.)

3. Solomon's Princes and Officers. The Prosperous Kingdom and the King's great wisdom.

CHAPTER IV

1. The Princes. 1–6.
2. The Officers. 7–19.
3. The Prosperous Kingdom. 20–28.
4. Solomon's great wisdom. 29–34.

"So King Solomon was king over all Israel." A list of the princes and the twelve officers is given first. Their names fit in perfectly with the character of the Kingdom, foreshadowing the coming and better Kingdom of our Lord. We give the names of the princes with their meaning. Azariah, "Jehovah is help"; Elihoreph, "my God is reward"; Ahiah, "Brother of Jehovah"; Jehoshaphat, "Jehovah judges"; Benaiah, "Built up by Jehovah"; Zabud, "Gift bestowed"; Ahishar, "Brother of ability"; Adoniram, "Lord of Heights." *

Then we have here the record of a remarkable increase of Judah and Israel "as the sand which is by the sea in multitude." It reminds us of the promise made to Abraham, "in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore." (Gen. xxii:17.) Such an increase will come during the reign of God's appointed King, the Prince of Peace. His Kingdom reached from the river (Euphrates) to the border of Egypt. Even so had Jehovah spoken to Abraham that his seed should possess the territory from Egypt unto Euphrates. This was realized in Solomon's Kingdom. Now the Jews hold not even the little land called Palestine. When the true King comes the promised territory will be given once more to the seed of Abraham. It was a time of great prosperity. Another prophetic hint we find in the fact that the great multitude were in peace, "eating and

* We would suggest that the reader find with the help of a good concordance the meaning of the names of the officers given in this chapter.

drinking and making merry.'' Such will be the universal state of the people in the coming Kingdom when ''every man shall call his neighbor under the vine and the fig tree'' (Zech iii:10), as under Solomon's reign Judah and Israel dwelt safely every man under his vine and fig tree. (Verse 25.) Solomon had also great stables full of horses and many chariots. He had 4000 horses; the number 40,000 in verse 26 is evidently the error of a copyist. (See 2 Chron. ix:25.) There was much to be supplied for the provision of the Court of the King. See the daily need; but they lacked nothing. How great the need there is in the world during the absence of the true King! But when He comes to reign ''He will satisfy the poor with bread.'' (Ps. cxxxii:15.)

And how marvellously the Lord answered the King's petition! The greatness of Solomon's wisdom, the manysidedness of its character, as well as the world-wide impression this wisdom made is recorded in verses 29-34. ''Happy is the man who findeth wisdom, and the man who causeth understanding to go forth; for merchandise with it is better than merchandise of silver, and the gain from it than the most fine gold.'' (Prov. iii:13-14.) The King expressed in these words his own experience. His wisdom was greater than the wisdom of the wise men of the East and greater than Egypt.* He spake 3000 proverbs and made 1005 songs. The book of Proverbs contains hundreds of his sayings. But not all these proverbs were preserved and only a few of his songs. (Song of Solomon and a few Psalms.) Creation itself was known by the great King. (See verse 33.) According to an apocryphical book (Wisdom of Solomon) he had knowledge of kosmogony, astronomy, the alteration of solstices, the cycles of years, the natures of wild beasts, the forces of spirits, the thoughts of men, the qualities of plants and roots. Jewish tradition even declares that he could converse with the wild beasts. This knowledge of creation was not a perfect knowledge. However, it also reminds us

* Compare 1 Chron. ii:6. Ethan, 1 Chron. vi:44; xv:17, 19. Ps. lxxxix (Inscription); Heman see 1 Chron. vi:33; xxv:5. Psalm lxxxviii (Inscription).

of the glorious time when the secrets of nature, lost through the fall of man, will be restored through Him, who will deliver groaning creation. (Rom. viii:21.)

4. The Building of the Temple and its Dedication.

Chapter v-viii

CHAPTER V

HIRAM KING OF TYRE

1. Hiram sends servants to Solomon. 1.
2. The Message of Solomon. 2–6.
3. Hiram's answer and league with Solomon. 7–12.
4. Solomon's workmen. 13–18.

In connection with 1 Kings v-viii the chapters in 2 Chronicles should be read which give a more extensive account. (2 Chronicles ii-v:11.) Solomon now begins the great work, which may be called his life work, the building of the house of the Lord. Hiram heard of Solomon's enthronement, and sent messengers to Solomon. This Gentile King was a lover of David. David had made before his death abundant material for the building of the house and Hiram had supplied much of it. (1 Chron. xxii:4.) Solomon requested that Hiram furnish cedar trees from Lebanon for the building of the house and Hiram agrees to float them down the coast. According to the request of Hiram, Solomon supplied Hiram's household with 20,000 measures of wheat and twenty measures of oil. Hiram also sent a master-workman by name of Huram whose mother was a Jewess. (2 Chron. ii:13-14; 1 Kings vii:14.) This cooperation of the Gentiles in building the Temple is also prophetic, for the riches of the Gentiles are promised to Israel. (Is. lx:6; liv:3.) Jews and Gentiles will unite to manifest His Glory. A large number of workmen were needed. Two classes were employed. First there were 30,000 men out of all Israel raised by a levy; 10,000 worked by relays of 10,000 a month. The second class was composed of strangers (1 Kings v:15; 2 Chron. ii:17-18),

150,000 in number; 70,000 were burden bearers and 80,000 hewers in stone. Over all were 3300 officers (verse 16) with 550 chiefs (1 Kings ix:23), of whom 250 were native Israelites. (2 Chron. viii:10.) The great stones and the costly (splendid) stones and hewed stones are especially mentioned. They were for the foundation of the house. These stones may illustrate all those who as "living stones" are built up a spiritual house. (1 Pet. ii:5.) Through Grace all those are taken out of nature's place and prepared to fit into that marvellous temple of the Lord "fitly framed together—an holy temple in the Lord." (Eph. ii:20.)

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE TEMPLE

CHAPTER VI

1. The date of the Beginning of the Building. 1.
2. The house, the porches and side chambers. 2–10.
3. The Divine Charge. 11–14.
4. The Internal arrangements. 15–22.
5. The Cherubim. 23–30.
6. The Doors. 31–35.
7. The inner Court. The Temple finished. 36–38.

Three chapters are taken up with the description of the Temple, its contents, Solomon's house of the forest of Lebanon and with the dedication of the house of the Lord. Rich foreshadowings are here which we must pass over in greater part. Books could be written on these three chapters. However, we hope to point out the way for a closer study of the Temple. The building of the Temple commenced in the month of Zif ("splendour"), the second month when nature bursts forth in all her splendour. There comes a morning without clouds (2 Sam. xxiii:4) with glorious splendour, when He, for whose coming all is waiting, will build the Temple. (Zech. vi:12.) It took seven years to finish the house. The Temple was erected on Mount Moriah. There was an immense foundation of great hewn and splendid stones, a platform upon which the Temple was built. This great foundation remains to the

present day, known by the name "Haram-esh-Sheref," and upon it there stands now the Mosque of Omar. One stone alone is thirty-eight feet and nine inches long. "This great stone is one of the most interesting stones of the world, for it is the chief corner stone of the Temple's massive wall. Among the ancient Jews, the foundation corner stone of their great Sanctuary on Moriah was regarded as the emblem of moral and spiritual truths. It had two functions to perform; first, like the other foundation stones, it was a support for the masonry above, but it had also to face both ways, and was thus a bond of union between the two walls. . . . The engineers, in order to ascertain the dimensions of this foundation stone, worked round it, and report that it is three feet eight inches high, and fourteen feet in length. At the angle it is let down into the rock to a depth of fourteen inches, but, as the rock rises towards the north, the depth at four feet north of the angle is increased to thirty-two inches, while the northern end seems entirely embedded in the rock. The block is further described as squared and polished, with a finely dressed face. . . . Fixed in its abiding position three thousand years ago, it still stands sure and steadfast." *

Still more interesting is the fact that the men who made an exploration of this Temple wall, some 3000 years old, discovered certain marks. We quote from the Palestine Exploration report: "I must now speak somewhat fully on a subject which has engaged public attention for some time, and has already given rise to many conjectures, namely, the 'writings,' either painted on or cut into the stones, discovered lately on the bottom rows of the wall, at the south-east corner of the Haram, at a depth of about eighty feet there, where the foundations lie on the live rock itself. I have examined them carefully in their places—by no means an easy task. The ventilation at that depth is unfavourable to free breathing; nor is the pale glimmer of the taper, or the sudden glare of the magnesium wire, calculated materially to assist epigraphical studies. . . . I have

* From Report of "Recent Discoveries in the Temple Hill."

come to the following conclusions:—First: The signs cut, or painted, were on the stones when they were first laid in their present places. Secondly: They do not represent any inscription. Thirdly: *They are Phœnician.* I consider them to be partly letters, partly numerals, and partly special mason's, or quarry, signs. Some of them were recognisable at once as well-known Phœnician characters; others, hitherto unknown in Phœnician epigraphy, I had the rare satisfaction of being able to identify on absolutely undoubted antique Phœnician structures in Syria, such as the primitive sub-structures of the harbour at Sidon. No less did I observe them on the bevelled stones taken from ancient edifices and built into later work throughout Phœnicia. For a striking and obvious instance of this, the stones of which (old Phœnician stones to wit) immured in their present place at subsequent periods, teem with peculiar marks identical with those at Jerusalem." Thus the stones testify to the fact that strangers, Phœnicians and others were employed. This rock foundation, which has remained unshaken, is an illustration of Him, the rock of ages, upon whom everything rests.

The dimensions of the house were twice the size of those adopted in the tabernacle; the whole length was 60 cubits, the breadth 20 cubits, and the height also 20 cubits. The interior was lined with boards of cedar, the house was overlaid with gold, and a wall surrounded the whole. The upper chambers were 10 cubits high, on which account the height of the whole building is stated to have been 30 cubits. The porch before the entrance of the Temple was 10 cubits in length and as many in breadth, and here were placed two massive pillars of brass, named Jachin (that is, *he shall establish,* or, *steadfastness*) and Boaz (that is, *in Him is strength*). On the other three sides a building was erected three stories in height, which rose to two-thirds of the height of the house of the Temple. The sanctuary, 40 cubits in length, contained the golden altar of incense, ten candlesticks of gold, and ten tables of gold. The holiest of all was a cube of 20 cubits; it contained two cherubim made

of the wood of the olive-tree, overlaid with gold, and 10 cubits in height, whose expanded wings touched in the middle, and, on the opposite sides, touched the walls.

In verse 7 we find a remarkable statement: "And the house when it was building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither, so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building." Thus orderly and quietly proceeds the erection of that spiritual house, the church, destined to be the holy Temple in eternity. However, the Temple itself does not exactly prefigure the church. It is a type of the Father's house above where God dwells. The chambers or dwellings round about remind us of the words of our Lord: "In my Father's house are many mansions." (Literally: abodes, dwellings.) It is a blessed hint that God will have His people dwelling with Him. But the Temple is also prophetic of another Temple which will yet stand on the earth when our Lord reigns. His Glory will cover and fill that house, which will be a house of prayer and worship for all nations.

After the description of the dimensions of the house, and after he had built it and built the chambers, the word of the Lord came to Solomon telling him that His dwelling among the children of Israel depended upon Solomon's faithfulness. Soon the failure came in and Ezekiel saw later the departure of the Glory of the Lord from the Temple and from Jerusalem.

And in the house gold was the prominent feature. The word "gold" occurs eleven times in this chapter. All was overlaid with gold. Besides this there were "glistening stones, and of divers colours." (1 Chron. xxix:2.) Everything was of pure gold; the sanctuary might have been called the golden house. The floor was overlaid with gold, the walls, the doors and ceiling were covered with pure gold, and the walls had inlaid precious stones. (2 Chron. iii:6.) Gold is the emblem of divine righteousness and divine glory. Therefore the whole sanctuary witnessed to the glory of righteousness which is in keeping with the

prophetic foreshadowing of this house. How much greater will be the glory and the manifestation of divine righteousness when the true King builds the house and manifests His Glory!

Another interesting feature present the Cherubim. While the Cherubim which belonged to the ark of the covenant remained unchanged, for it was the same ark which was in the tabernacle, Solomon put on either side of it the big figure of a Cherub carved of olive wood and overlaid with gold. Each was ten cubits high. The two with their wings met over the mercy seat, while the wing of the one touched the wall on the south and the wing of the other touched the wall on the north. Then instead of these Cherubim, like those on the ark, looking downwards towards the mercy seat, they looked outwards. (2 Chron. iii:13.)* And this is in harmony with the reign of righteousness which is foreshadowed in Solomon and the Temple. "At that time, righteousness reigning and being established, these symbols of God's power can look outwards in blessing, instead of having their eyes fixed on the covenant alone. During the time there was nothing but the covenant, they gazed upon it; but when God has established His Throne in righteousness, He can turn towards the world to bless it according to that righteousness."

THE HOUSE OF SOLOMON AND PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER. THE FURNISHINGS OF THE TEMPLE

CHAPTER VII

1. The house of the Forest of Lebanon. 1–7.
2. The royal Palace and the House of Pharaoh's daughter. 8–12.
3. The Master workman. 13–14.
4. The Great Pillars and Chapiters. 15–22.
5. The Brazen Sea. 23–26.
6. The ten Lavers with their carriages. 27–40.
7. Hiram's Work. 41–47.
8. The golden Utensils for the Interior. 48–51.

The description of the Palace Buildings come next.

* "Inwards" really means "towards the house" or "outwards."

These buildings are called "Solomon's own house." (Verse 1.) The buildings consisted of the following: The House of the Forest of Lebanon. (Verses 2-5.) The Porch of Pillars. (Verse 6.) The Porch of Judgment, where the King judged. (Verse 7.) The House where the King dwelt. (Verse 8.) The House where Pharaoh's daughter dwelt "like unto his House." (Verse 8.) The Wall which surrounded the great court. Seven things are mentioned in connection with the Palace buildings. While the Temple was God's dwelling place the Palace Buildings were the dwelling place of the King and his wife, Pharaoh's daughter. From there the King executed judgment. Here we have prefigured the glorious administration of the Kingdom, when our Lord judges in righteousness. The house of the forest of Lebanon is the type of His Glory among the Gentiles. And inasmuch as the house of Pharaoh's daughter was closely connected with Solomon's house and it is written "we are his house" (Hebrews iii:6), we have here foreshadowed the association of the Church with Christ in His coming reign of Glory. Everything in the Temple and in the Palace Buildings was glorious and revealed the immense riches of the great King. What a day it will be when the riches and glory of Christ will be manifested and when the Saints of God will share it all!

Then Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre. This was not the King, but a master workman. His father was a Tyrian and his mother by birth of the tribe of Dan was a widow and had married a man of Naphtali. This reconciles an alleged discrepancy. (See 1 Kings vii:14 and 2 Chron. ii:13.) In Chronicles he is called Huram.* His mother belonged to the same tribe to which Aholiab the coworker of Bezaleel belonged. (See Exodus xxxi:1-6.) The two pillars of solid brass Jachin ("He will establish") and Boaz ("in Him is Strength") are first described. They were a new thing for the house of the Lord. The outward support these pillars afforded speak of Him who is the

* Probably Huram-abi (Abi—meaning "my father") was his correct name.

support of everything and whose power upholdeth all things. Read Jeremiah's words concerning these pillars (Jer. xxvii:19, etc.) and the fulfilment (2 Kings xxv:13-17; Jerem. lii:17). All the vessels mentioned were made on a much larger scale, and greater in number, than those of the tabernacle. The great molten sea supported by twelve oxen which looked towards the North, South, East and West, the river wrought like a cup, like lilies, contained two thousand baths (about 16,250 gallons of water).* Here the priests and Levites performed their ablutions. The water was drawn from the big reservoir. There was a large supply. Living waters in abundance will flow forth from Jerusalem in the coming Kingdom ages. The oxen (the burden bearing beast) are typical of service. Of all this we shall find more in Chronicles. Then all the things which David had dedicated, the silver, the gold and the vessels were put by Solomon among the treasures of the house of the Lord.

THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE

CHAPTER VIII

1. The great assembly. 1–2.
2. The transportation of the Ark. 3–9.
3. The Glory of the Lord filling the house. 10–11.
4. Solomon's opening words. 12–21.
5. Solomon's great Prayer. 22–53.
6. Solomon's Benediction. 54–61.
7. The Sacrifices and the Feast. 62–66.

The ark of the covenant is now to be transported out of David's city to be put into the most holy place, under the wings of the great cherubim. The ark was carried, according to the instructions in the law, by the priests. A great sacrificial ceremony also took place; so many sheep and oxen were sacrificed so that "they could not be numbered for multitude." The ark now had found a resting place. (Ps. cxxxii:8.) The staves by which the ark had been car-

* 2 Chron. iv:5 has 3000 baths: this must mean the actual capacity of this colossal vessel, while the 2000 measures in 1 Kings gives the usual contents of the laver.

ried were now drawn out. They were not to be removed (Ex. xxv:15); but now they were pulled out, but remained there as a memorial of their journeys and the Lord's faithfulness in bringing them into the promised rest. But in the ark nothing was found but the two tables of stone; Aaron's rod and the pot of Manna were missing.* The rod of Aaron was the emblem of the priestly grace which had accompanied them on their journey and the Manna was their food in the wilderness. Both Aaron's rod and the pot of Manna were provisions for the wilderness; they would not have been in keeping with the reign of glory and peace, as well as the rest they now enjoyed. Thus when we are brought into glory we have no more need of priestly intercession and help, nor do we need the Manna any longer. But the law was not missing, for as regards that earthly Kingdom over which our Lord will yet reign, its foundation and administration will be the law of righteousness.

When the ark had been placed the glory-cloud filled the house. Jehovah had appeared in His Glory to dwell in the house. And when that future Temple will be on the earth as seen by Ezekiel in his great Temple-vision, the Glory will return and fill the house, and more than that, the whole earth will be filled with His glory. (Ezek. xliii:1-5; Numb. xiv:21.)

Then Solomon spoke. A great and marvellous dedicatory and intercessory prayer follows. It must be noticed that in all, especially in the bringing of the sacrifices, Solomon assumes the full character of priest. He acts as the King-Priest, another Melchizedek, King of Salem. And this he was, King of righteousness in his judgments and King of Peace. In all this he foreshadows Him, who is a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. "He shall be a priest upon His throne" (Zech. vi:13) is the still unfulfilled prediction. Now He is upon the Father's Throne as the priest and advocate of His people. When He comes again He will have His own Throne and be also a priest. We have therefore in Solomon's functions in dedicating the Temple and in

* Hebrews ix:4 has reference to the Ark in the Tabernacle.

the bringing of the sacrifices a prophetic type of our Lord in His future royal Priesthood. First, Solomon turned towards the Most Holy filled with the Glory of the Lord and said: "I have surely built thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in forever." Then he blessed the congregation. He mentions once more David, his illustrious father, and the covenant-promise. "And the Lord hath performed His word that He spake, and I am risen up in the room of David my father, and sit upon the throne of Israel as the Lord promised, and have built an house for the name of the Lord God of Israel." (Verse 20.) And yet the covenant-promise had not seen its accomplishment; the failure of Solomon and the passing of the Glory witnesses to that. Yet Solomon, his reign of peace and prosperity and especially his great work in the building of the Temple foreshadows the great coming fulfillment of the Davidic covenant in the enthroned Christ upon the throne of his father David. A closer study of the great prayer we must leave with the reader. The different petitions are of deep interest and the Kingdom characteristics are prominent. "The prayer sets the people under the form of a righteous government, abounding indeed in kindness and forgiveness, yet one which will not hold the guilty innocent; and it presents God as the people's resource, when the consequences of their sin fall upon them according to the principles laid down by Moses in Deuteronomy and elsewhere."* And in the prayer mention is made "that all people of the earth may know Thy name, to fear thee, as do Thy people Israel; and that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by thy name." (Verse 43.) This looks forward to the ingathering of the nations into the Kingdom, when nations will be joined to a God-fearing Israel. (See Zech. ii:11; iii:23). The feast mentioned which followed the dedication feast is the feast of Tabernacles. And this is again highly typical for the Feast of Tabernacles is as a type unfulfilled. While it pointed back to the time when they were

* Synopsis of the Bible.

in the wilderness, living in tents and journeying towards the land of promise, it also pointed to the future, when the Name of Jehovah was to be known among all the nations of the earth, when the nations would come to worship the Lord of Hosts. (Zech. xiv.) The conjunction of the dedication of the Temple with the Feast of Tabernacles was more than significant, it was prophetic. It is only when the Lord Jesus Christ occupies the throne and He builds the Temple of Glory, that the nations will seek after Him and be converted.* And while the King prayed and blessed the people, the people full of happiness and joy blessed the King. Heaven and earth rejoiced. It is the climax of Israel's history in the land.

5. Jehovah appears unto Solomon. The Greatness of the King.

CHAPTER IX

1. The Second Appearance of the Lord to Solomon. 1–9.
2. Transactions with Hiram. 10–14.
3. The Levy of the King. 15–23.
4. Pharaoh's daughter occupies the house. 24.
5. The King's offerings. 25.
6. Solomon's navy. 26–27.

Jehovah's righteous government in the midst of His people Israel had now been established. This government was given and entrusted to Solomon the Son of David, so that, in a sense, Solomon occupied the throne of the Lord. All depended upon the faithfulness of Solomon. Therefore the Lord appeared unto him the second time, not to say once more: "Ask what I shall give thee," but to assure him that He would keep His promise made to David and if he would be faithful his throne would be established. Then He warns against disobedience. If he serves other gods, Israel was to be cut off from the land and the house would be forsaken. How all this came to pass, Solomon's idolatry, disobedience, the subsequent shameful history of

* See our Annotations on Leviticus xxiii.

Israel's apostasy, we shall soon have to follow. Then God used Nebuchadnezzar to carry out the judgment upon Jerusalem and the Temple. Another Son of David will receive some day the throne and the government will rest in His hands. In Him all will be accomplished which the Prophets have spoken and which was foreshadowed in Solomon.

The transaction with Hiram is interesting. Besides furnishing Solomon with timber he also gave him gold; this amounted to 120 talents of gold (3½ million dollars). Solomon gave to Hiram twenty cities in Galilee. When he came to look at them, he was displeased with them and called them Cabul, which probably means "as nothing." These cities may have been given to King Hiram for the gold Solomon had received from him. The cities were later restored to Solomon by Hiram, most likely after Solomon had paid back the gold Hiram had furnished.

The activity of the great King in building fortresses and cities is described in this chapter. Hazor became under him a stronghold in defence of Syria. The plain of Jezreel had for a protection Megiddo. Gezer and Baalath were other strongholds. Tadmor is Palmyra, called so by the Greeks and Romans, while it is called still to-day Tadmor. In this chapter (verse 18) the name is given in Hebrew as "Tamar"; in 2 Chron. viii:4 it is Tadmor." Tamar means "palm tree," the same as Palmyra. Chronicles uses Tadmor because it was known by that name after the exile.

And Solomon had a fleet of ships, manned mostly by the experienced shipmen of King Hiram. Another fleet is mentioned in x:22, a navy of Tharshish, which, with Hiram's navy, sailed every three years to fetch gold, silver, ivory and apes and peacocks. Ophir has been variously located. Peru, the Molucca Islands, Armenia, Arabia and parts of Africa have been suggested. All these statements show the great prosperity of the Kingdom.

6. Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. His great Riches and Splendour.

CHAPTER X

1. The Visit of the Queen. 1–13.
2. Solomon's enormous wealth. 14–15.
3. The Targets and Shields. 16–17.
4. The Ivory Throne. 18–20.
5. The abundance of gold and the depreciation of silver. 21–22.
6. The greatest living Monarch. 23–26.
7. His chariots and horsemen. 27–29.

The visit of the Queen of Sheba, who had heard of Solomon's wisdom, is the next recorded event of much interest and significance. It illustrates what was previously stated in chapter iv:34. Sheba was known to such ancient writers as Strabo and Pliny. It was the center of a vast commercial empire in the southwestern part of the Arabian peninsula. The ruins which are still to be seen testify of a great civilization. (See Isaiah lx:6; Psalm lxxii:15; Jerem. vi:20; Ezek. xxvii:22; xxxviii:13). She heard and came; she communed with Solomon and brought presents; she was filled with wonder at all she heard and saw and declared: "Behold the half was not told me." Then she uttered her praise: "Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the Lord thy God, who delighteth in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel, because the Lord loved Israel forever, therefore made He thee King, to do judgment and justice." Then she gave gold, spices and precious stones of an enormous value. In all this glory which came to Solomon we have a prophetic type of the glory which will come to Him, who is greater than Solomon. When He occupies the throne, the Gentiles will seek Him and praise the King as the Queen of Sheba praised Solomon. "The Kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; the Kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all the Kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him. . . . And He shall live, and to

Him shall be given of the gold of Sheba; prayer also shall be made for Him continually, and daily shall He be praised." (Ps. lxxii:10-15.) This great Kingdom Psalm will be fulfilled when our Lord comes again. "The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come, they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the Lord." (Is. lx:5-6.) All these and many other prophecies will be fulfilled in the future Kingdom of our Lord. The visit of the Queen of Sheba foreshadows all this. See also the warning of our Lord in Matth. xii:42.

And what riches and glory the King possessed! Everything was of gold. His throne was of solid ivory overlaid with gold. Twelve wonderful lions stood on the one side and on the other. All the drinking vessels were of gold. Silver depreciated in his days; it was worth next to nothing. "The King made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as sycomore trees." (Verse 27.) Compare this with what will take place in the coming Kingdom of our Lord. "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree." (Is. lv:13.) "For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron." (Is. lx:17.)

7. Solomon's Failure. Judgment announced and the beginning of disruption.

CHAPTER XI

1. Solomon's Polygamy and Departure from God. 1–13.
2. Hadad the Edomite. 14–22.
3. Rezon the second adversary. 23–25.
4. Jeroboam. 26–40.
5. Solomon's Reign and Death. 41–43.

"But—." An ominous word with which this chapter begins. It introduces us to the sad picture of Solomon's

great apostasy. "He shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses, for as much as the Lord hath said unto you, ye shall henceforth return no more that way. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away, neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold." (Deut. xvii:16-17.) The Lord anticipated a royal form of government for Israel and gave these instructions concerning the King. The first failure is seen in the previous chapter. He multiplied horses and brought them out of Egypt. Egypt is the type of the world. God had answered his prayer and then added riches and everything else. But his heart was captivated by riches and luxuries. No doubt he loved these things and multiplied silver and gold. The Devil's crime, pride, was found in him. His heart was lifted up. (Deut. xvii:20.) But worse than all he multiplied wives. The sad record is found in the opening verses of this chapter. Then his heart was turned away by his wives and concubines after other gods. David, though his trouble also originated in polygamy, had always, in all his sin and failure, clung to Jehovah. In this sense David's heart was perfect with the Lord his God. He did not turn away from the Lord, nor did David go after strange gods. Solomon's guilt was great. The Lord had appeared twice to him; He never appeared to David. And with all the Lord had done for Solomon, the evidences of His grace towards him, the house he could build, the superior wisdom he had, the great King departed from the Lord. Such is the heart of man, desperately wicked. It becomes now evident that the oath-bound covenant concerning a Man to sit upon the Throne of David with a glorious Kingdom established, must be fulfilled in another son of David. Solomon fails. The Kingdom is rent from him. The glory departs. Never again were the scenes of glory repeated in the Kingdom of Israel. But when David's Lord and David's Son appears, the King of Righteousness, the Prince of Peace, the Kingdom and the Glory will be restored to Israel.

It has been stated that Solomon himself was not actually guilty of idolatry. If he built the places of idolatrous worship for his many wives only, he was guilty of the sin of idolatry. The abominations were then introduced. Luxuries, wealth, self-indulgence, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life led into idolatry. It is the same in the closing days of the present age. Ashtoreth, a Phœnician goddess was worshipped with impure rites. Milcom (Molech) was the idol-god of the Ammonites. Chemosh was the sun-god and war-god of the Moabites.

And the Lord who had appeared twice unto Solomon, the Lord who had commanded him not to go after other gods, was now angry with Solomon. Judgment is announced. Two adversaries were stirred up at once against Solomon, Hadad the Edomite and Rezon of Syria, who abhorred Israel.

Jeroboam, a servant of King Solomon (verse 11) lifted up his hand against the King. Ahijah the Prophet, attired in a new garment, meets the future King of the ten tribe division and tore his garment into twelve pieces. "And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces, for thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold I will rend the Kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee." But the message of the Lord through Ahijah also declared His faithfulness to David. Jehovah still speaks of "David my servant"; he is "to have a light always before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen Me to put My name there." The house of David in the midst of all the evil is not forgotten. There will be affliction, "but not forever." (Verse 38.) And Jeroboam also has the opportunity of having a house "as I built for David" on the condition of obedience. But ambitious Jeroboam did not keep the statutes and commandments of the Lord.

And Solomon? Not a word of repentance! No tears like those his father wept. No confession as it came from David's lips. Only one thing is stated. Only one act is mentioned of apostatized Solomon. He sought to kill Jeroboam. After a reign of 40 years, Solomon passed away not quite 60 years old.

III. The Divided Kingdom.

Chapter xii-xvi

1. Rehoboam and the Revolt of the Ten Tribes.

CHAPTER XII

1. The Revolt of the Northern Tribes. 1–20.
2. The threatening War averted. 21–24.
3. Jeroboam's wicked schemes. 25–33.

Rehoboam ("Enlarger of the People") is the only son of Solomon mentioned in the Bible. (1 Chron. iii:10.) Ecclesiastes ii:18-19 and iv:13-16 seems to give a hint that his father was fearful about his reign in his stead. In 2 Chronicles x-xiii we find the history of Rehoboam more fully, which we follow in the annotations of that book. He was the son of the Ammonitess Naamah. During the first three years he was outwardly faithful, but after that he drifted like his father into idolatry and its moral evils. (1 Kings xiv:23-24; 2 Chron. xi:13-17.) He forsook the Law of the Lord and the people followed him. (2 Chron. xii:1.) The polygamous tendency of his father and grandfather were also indulged by him. (2 Chr. xi:21.) Jeroboam who had fled into Egypt (xi:40) was recalled and the history of the revolt follows. Jeroboam was made King over the ten tribes, while Rehoboam reigned over Judah. What took place was from the Lord "that he might perform his saying, which the Lord spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat." (xi:31.) The disruption of the Kingdom had taken place. Up to the deportation of the ten tribes under Shalmaneser (722 B. C.) covers 253 years. During that time thirteen Kings reigned over Judah and twenty over the ten tribes; there were also two periods of lawlessness. The apostasy of the ten tribe

Kingdom was complete; none of their Kings served the Lord. Under Ahab and his two sons Ahaziah and Joram the Baal worship became universal. It was different with the Kings of Judah. A number of them were God-fearing. (Asa, Jehoshaphat, Uzziah, Jotham, Hezekiah and Josiah.) Others were wicked blasphemers as we shall see from their history. It is also noteworthy that the reign of the wicked Kings was shorter than the reign of those who feared the Lord.

After the stoning of Adoram, Rehoboam's collector, Rehoboam fled to Jerusalem and gathered an army from Judah and Benjamin to fight against Israel to bring back the Kingdom to the son of Solomon. Shemaiah ("heard of Jehovah"), a man of God,* brought the message from the Lord not to fight against Israel. They were obedient and the war was averted. Many Israelites, who were true to Jehovah, as well as all the priests and Levites remained in the Kingdom of Judah.

Jeroboam made Shechem his capital. He also built the ancient Penuel ("the face of God," Gen. xxxii:30; Judges viii:8), but he did not meet the Lord there like Jacob. Then the step was done which precipitated idolatry. To protect his Kingdom and keep the people back from the true worship of Jehovah, he placed, with the consent of the people, in Dan and Beth-el on the northern and southern boundaries of his Kingdom, two calves of gold. Thus with an unspeakable blasphemy he said: "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." The lowest class of the people were chosen as priests. Then he also offered sacrifices unto the calves that he had made. All was devised of his own heart and God's Word was completely set aside. It corresponds to the great apostasy of Romanism with its wicked, blasphemous rites.

* As failure had come in Prophecy at once reappears. Shemaiah must have been a very courageous man to stand in face of a gathered army of 180,000 men, an angry King and an angry people and declare a message which must have been decidedly unwelcome. And one cannot but admire the gracious submission of King and people.

2. Jeroboam and Rehoboam and their Reign.

Chapter xiii-xiv.

CHAPTER XIII

THE MAN OF GOD FROM JUDAH

1. The Man of God and Jeroboam. 1–10.
2. The Temptation and lying message. 11–19.
3. Judgment announced. 20–22.
4. The fate of the Man of Judah. 23–32.
5. Jeroboam's impenitence. 33–34.

A dramatic scene opens this chapter. The idolatrous King is engaged in his religious ceremony when an unnamed man of God interrupted him. He did not rebuke Jeroboam, but addressed himself to the altar, uttering a remarkable prophecy: "Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burned upon thee." More than 300 years later, and nearly a century after the ten tribes had been carried away captive, this prophecy was fulfilled. (2 Kings xxiii:15-18.) The Man of God announced the unborn King by name and also what he would do, just as Isaiah announced the unborn King Cyrus and his work. Higher Criticism has labored in vain to destroy this great evidence of prophecy. Then the Man of God added a sign which happened literally in the presence of the King. The angry King commanded the seizure of the prophet, but the outstretched arm withered. The withered arm was restored in answer to the prophet's prayer. Jehovah was seeking in mercy even Jeroboam in all his wickedness. It was unsuccessful, for it is written: "After this King Jeroboam returned not from his evil way." The Man of God and what happened to him occupies the greater part of the chapter. The King invited him to a feast, probably an idol feast, and wanted to give him a reward. He refused both because the Lord had charged him not to eat bread nor drink water, nor return the same way he came. The Man

of God was to have no fellowship with the works of darkness. The same principle is laid down for God's people in the New Testament. (2 Cor. vi:14-18; Eph. v:11; 2 John 9-11.) Then comes his great failure, showing that while he was a messenger of God, his heart was not altogether right with God. It was through the old prophet that a lying spirit induced him to disobey the Word of the Lord. And when the old prophet announced his coming judgment we read not a word that he turned to the Lord with confession and prayer. Then the predicted fate overtook him. It is a solemn lesson which teaches us obedience to the Word of God. "It teaches us that, whenever God has made His will known to us, we are not to allow any after thought whatever to call it in question, even although the latter may take the form of the Word of God. If we were nearer to the Lord, we would feel that the only true and right position is to follow that which He told us at first. In every case our part is to obey what He has said." The lion who had killed the disobedient prophet remained for a time with the body without touching it. It was to show the divine character of the judgment. If we look upon Jeroboam's departure from God and idolatrous worship as typical of the corruption of Romanism, we may see in the Man of God from Judah, who rebuked the false altar, a type of Protestantism. Like the prophet who delivered the message faithfully but became disobedient, Protestantism is disobedient to the Word of God and the judgment of God will overtake it in the end.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PASSING OF JEROBOAM AND REHOBOAM

1. Sickness and Death of Jeroboam's Son. 1–18.
2. Jeroboam's reign and death. 19–20.
3. Reboboam's apostacy, punishment and death. 21–31.

We come now to the passing of both Kings, Jeroboam of Israel and Rehoboam of Judah. Abijah ("Jehovah is my father"), the son of wicked Jeroboam, was sick. "That

child was the one green spot in Jeroboam's life and home; the one germ of hope. And as his father loved him truly, so all Israel had set their hopes on him. Upon the inner life of this child, its struggles and its victories, lies the veil of Scripture silence; and best that it should be so. But now his pulses were beating quick and weak, and that life of love and hope seemed fast ebbing. None with the father in those hours of darkness, neither counsellor, courtier, prophet nor priest, save the child's mother."* Then the unhappy King remembered Ahijah, who had first announced his exaltation to be king. (xi:31.) Disguised, the wife of Jeroboam proceeds to Shiloh not to ask prayer for the sick son but to find out (as if consulting a fortune teller) what should become of the child. Abijah was blind. What need was there for Jeroboam's wife to feign to be another? And the Lord saw her coming and announced her approach to blind Ahijah. She hears from his lips not good tidings, but a message of judgment. Judgment upon the house of Jeroboam is announced and when the feet of the mother entered Tirzah once more the child would die. Concerning the child Abijah, the prophet, said: "In him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam." Thus the little one was saved and removed from the evil to come upon the house of Jeroboam. Then Jeroboam died. In 2 Chronicles xiii:20 we read "the Lord struck him and he died." Nadab reigned after him for only two years.

Then follows the passing of Rehoboam.† His reign was begun well, but he also turned against the Lord, and Judah did evil in the sight of the Lord. Idolatry and immorality flourished. A corrupted worship led to a corrupted life. Departure from God and His Word leads always to moral decline. Our times bear witness to this. Then the punishment came in the fifth year of his reign. Shishak, King of Egypt, took Jerusalem and carried away the treasures of

* Bible-History by Edersheim.

† In 2 Chronicles we find the fuller record. He had 18 wives and 60 concubines. His family consisted of 28 sons and 60 daughters. (2 Chron. xi.)

the house of the Lord and of the King. He took away the golden shields of Solomon so that Rehoboam had to substitute shields of brass. Shishak was the founder of the xxii Dynasty. Jeroboam had been with him (xi:40), and it is not improbable that at his instigation Shishak made his expedition to Jerusalem. In the temple ruins of Amon at Karnak, near Thebes, are recorded more than sixty Ephraimitic cities that paid tribute to Shishak, also the names of many more Judæan cities; there also is a picture of Rehoboam. The detailed description of Shishak and his invasion, the work of Shemaiah the prophet in averting a greater disaster, we find in 2 Chronicles xii.

3. Abijam and Asa, Kings of Judah.

CHAPTER XV:1-24

1. Abijam of Judah. 1–8 (2 Chronicles xiii).
2. Asa of Judah. 9–24 (2 Chronicles xiv-xvi).

Abijam is called in Chronicles Abijah; in 2 Chron. xiii:21 he is called Abijahu. Abijam was undoubtedly the older form. It is possible that on account of his great address of rebuke to Jeroboam (2 Chron. xiii:4-12) they may have called him Abijah (Jehovah is my father). He ascended the throne in the eighteenth year of Jeroboam's reign and was King for three years. Here we find the statement that he walked in all the sins of his father and that his heart was not perfect with the Lord as the heart of David his father. The statement in chapter xi:36 is repeated, for David's sake did the Lord his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem. It was a custom (and is still so among the Fellaheen in Palestine) to keep a lamp constantly burning in the tent. The extinction of the lamp signified the removal of the family. The Lord remembered the house of David and his covenant and on account of that covenant the deserved judgment was held back. The war he fought with Jeroboam is not given in Kings but in Chronicles. We shall follow his history with the text in Chronicles.

Then his son Asa ("who will heal"), a mere boy, began to reign. During the first ten years of his reign the land had rest. (2 Chron. xiv:1.) He is the first King of Judah of whom it is said, he did right in the eyes of the Lord, as did David his father. A great reformation took place. The Sodomites with their abominations, the result of idolatry, he ended; the idols were removed. His grandmother, Maachah, was removed by him from being a queen * because she had made an idol, which Asa destroyed and burnt. And in Chronicles we read more of his good work. He was faithful to Jehovah, though he also failed in the end. The war with Zerah the Ethiopian is recorded in 2 Chronicles xiv, as well as other deeply interesting events during his reign. We do not touch those at this time. Our book here only records the war with Baasha, King of Israel, and Asa's strange alliance with Ben-hadad, King of Syria, to whom he presented the silver and gold which Shishak had left in the house of the Lord, and also the treasures of the King's house. Baasha had fortified Ramah, which meant the complete isolation and domination of Jerusalem. Asa, forgetful of his experience with Zerah and the manner of getting the victory (see his beautiful prayer, 2 Chron. xiv:11), and that the Lord who had smitten Zerah could also smite Baasha, feared the rival King and renewed the God dishonoring league with Syria which his father Abijah had made. What followed after this league, the divine exhortation and judgment delivered through Hanani the prophet and Asa's end we shall follow in Chronicles. Asa's sin and failure consisted in not trusting the Lord wholly, but using other means for deliverance. Hanani told him "thou hast relied on the King of Syria, and not on the Lord thy God."—"For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly; therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars." (2 Chr. xvi:7-9.) Then Asa imprisoned

* Most likely on account of his youth Maachah was regent during Asa's minority.

the faithful messenger. Alas! how often the failure of Asa has been repeated among God's people! Many begin well but lose the freshness of their faith. In our own days we behold on all sides Asa-movements, no perfect confidence in the Lord, but reliance upon all kinds of world schemes and alliances which make it impossible for the Lord to manifest the fullness of His power.

4. Kings of Israel.

CHAPTER XV:25-XVI

1. Nadab, King of Israel. 25–32.
2. Baasha, King of Israel. 33–xvi:7.
3. Elah, King of Israel. 8–14.
4. Zimri, King of Israel. 15–20.
5. Divisions. 21–22.
6. Omri, King of Israel. 23–28.
7. Ahab. 29–34.

Six Kings of Israel are now mentioned. Asa saw them all ascending the throne of Israel. The first mentioned is Nadab the son of Jeroboam who followed in his father's footsteps. His reign was cut short by an uprising of one of the house of Issachar, Baasha. He smote Nadab at Gibbethon. (Josh. xix:44; xxi:23.) Baasha then smote all the house of Jeroboam. Thus was the prediction of Ahijah, the prophet of Shiloh, fulfilled. "Because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin, by his provocation wherewith he provoked the Lord God of Israel to anger." God's predicted judgments never fail in the end. The judgments written over against our own age, this evil age, will some day be executed by the Lord as all other judgments which were threatened against Israel.

The new dynasty headed by Baasha began in the third year of Asa's reign. Baasha reigned twenty-four years. He sinned like Jeroboam did, though he had been the executer of God's judgment upon the descendants of the wicked King. He had not heard Jehovah's voice speaking in the events of the past. Then came the message of the Lord to

Baasha through Jehu the son of Hanani. (2 Chronicles xix:2; xx:34.) He reminds him that the Lord had raised him out of the dust (his family was unknown) and He had made him prince over Israel. He followed Jeroboam and Jeroboam's fate, and the fate of his house would now also be the fate of Baasha, who had executed the divine sentence. "I will make thy house like the house of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat." Such is divine justice.

Elah his son followed. His rule lasted not quite two years. He was in Tirzah. While the army was away fighting the Philistines, Elah in the house of his steward Arza ("earthliness") became drunk and was killed by his captain, Zimri, who at once began to reign in his place. He only reigned seven days and the only deed mentioned, besides his awful death, is the slaying of all the house of Baasha "according to the Word of the Lord, which he spake against Baasha by Jehu the prophet." Omri was made King by all Israel and with him began another dynasty. His first act was to besiege Tirzah where Zimri was, who set the King's palace on fire and perished in the flames. A division followed, but Omri prevailed. In all these sad records the fruits of the departure from God and from His Word are seen. They can easily be traced in the history of other nations down to our own times, the days which have brought the most awful bloodshed in the world's blood drenched history. It is all the result of sin. And Omri was worse than all that were before him, and his son Ahab was the climax of all wickedness in the Kingdom of Israel. There was no improvement, but a steady decline till God's hand smote them in judgment. Ahab introduced Baal-worship in Israel. This was the result of his marriage to Jezebel ("Dunghill"), the daughter of Ethbaal ("with Baal"), King of Zidonians. "Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the Kings of Israel that were before him." The last verse of this chapter records a presumptuous action. Hiel ("God liveth") built Jericho. He found out that the word of God spoken 500 years before (Josh. vi:26) was true.

IV. The Prophet Elijah and King Ahab

Chapter xvii-xxii

1. Elijah's Prediction and Miracles.

CHAPTER XVII

1. Elijah's Message to Ahab. 1.
2. At the Brook Cherith. 2–7.
3. With the Widow of Zarephath. 8–16.
4. The Widow's Son restored to Life. 17–24.

Upon this scene of complete departure of God, when Ahab and his heathen-wife worshipped Baal and all the vileness connected with that cult flourished in Israel, there appeared suddenly one of the greatest of God's prophets, Elijah ("my God is Jehovah") the Tishbite. "A grander figure never stood out even against the Old Testament sky than that of Elijah. As Israel's apostasy had reached its highest point in the time of Ahab, so the Old Testament antagonism to it in the person and mission of Elijah." *— "He was the impersonation of the Old Testament in one of its aspects: that of grandeur and judgment." His miracles, like those of Moses, have a judicial character. Heaven is shut in answer to his prayer and fire falls from heaven at his word. The last promise in the Old Testament is concerning Elijah the prophet who is to appear before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, to turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers. (Mal. iv:5-6.) See also the Lord's words concerning the coming of Elijah. (Matth. xvii:10-13.) He appeared with Moses on the transfiguration mountain. In the book of Revelation two witnesses are

* Edersheim.

mentioned who witness among Israel before the great day of the Lord comes. Though their names are not given, the miracles they perform clearly show that these witnesses will be like Moses and Elijah. "These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy (Elijah), and have power over waters to turn them to blood and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will." (Moses.) "And if any man will hurt them fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies." (Elijah.)—Rev. xi:5-6. James speaks of Elijah also and tells us he was a great man of prayer.

He appeared suddenly upon the scene * and said to wicked Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word. He had, no doubt, like other great servants of God, his training in secret.

The passage in James gives us the key: "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain." (James v:17.) It was in secret that he sought God's presence and wrestled in prayer till the Lord sent him forth with the message of judgment. Prayer, persevering prayer, is the one great need in the days of declension and departure from God, and it is the one resource of God's faithful ones. And how little, true and continued waiting upon God there is in the days of apostasy! When Elijah delivered the message to Ahab and said "according to my word" he did not speak presumptuously, but as standing in the Lord's own presence as his mouthpiece he had a perfect right to speak thus with divine authority.

As soon as he had delivered the message the Lord told him to hide himself by the brook Cherith. There he was miraculously fed by the ravens. He was in the appointed place and the Lord took care of him in His own way. Rationalistic Critics have made the absurd statement that the word "orebim"—ravens—should be "arabim," which

* Of his birth and origin we know almost nothing. His birthplace may have been Tishbi of Upper Galilee.

means Arabs.* But the Lord had commanded the birds, so shy in their nature, to supply His servant with the needed food. Twice every day they ministered to his wants. How this shows the omnipotence of the Lord. There is nothing too hard for Him. If we are in the right place, the place He assigns to us, we shall find that He still provides for those who trust and obey. The brook dried up. Surely his faith was being tested. Then he was sent to a destitute Gentile widow, who faced starvation. And concerning her the Lord said: "I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee." The Lord who commanded the ravens, commanded the widow. The Lord delights to take the weak things and use them for His glory. And how did Elijah find her? Preparing the last meal for herself and her child. Her faith was tested. She was to make first a little cake for Elijah and bring it unto him and afterwards to do the same for herself and her son. She obeyed and "the barrel of meal wasted not neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the Word of the Lord." Here was greater faith than in Israel. See also Luke iv:25. The story foreshadows the bringing in of the Gentiles to know the Lord. And when the widow's son fell ill and died and was restored by Elijah and he delivered him to the mother saying: See, thy son liveth—she made the blessed confession: "Now by this I know that thou art a man of God and that the Word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth." The truth of resurrection both physical and spiritual is here foreshadowed.

* Thus Canon Farrar in the Expositors Bible: "The word (orebim) may equally well mean people of the city Oreb, or of the rock Oreb; or merchants as in Ezek. xxvii:27; or Arabians.

2. Elijah on Carmel. The Answered Prayer.

CHAPTER XVIII

1. The command to see Ahab. 1.
2. Elijah's response. 2.
3. Ahab and Obadiah. 3–6.
4. Elijah and Obadiah. 7–15.
5. Elijah meets Ahab. 16–18.
6. Elijah's demand. 19–20.
7. The Events on Carmel. 21–40.
8. The Answered Prayer. 41–46.

The judgment of God as announced by Elijah continued its allotted time. A Greek historian, Menander of Ephesus, in his account of the acts of Ethbaal (the father of Jezebel, Ahab's wife), says: "Under him there was a want of rain from a certain month till the same month the following year." And Josephus, the Jewish historian who quotes this, adds, "by these words he designed the want of rain that was in the days of Ahab." It was in the third year of the drought that Elijah is commanded to show himself to Ahab. Elijah obeys. Great distress and famine was everywhere. Then we see Ahab and Obadiah, the governor or steward of his house, looking for a little pasture so that they might save the horses and mules alive. Obadiah ("servant of Jehovah"), holding a high position with Ahab, feared the Lord greatly. He belonged to the faithful remnant who did not bow the knee to Baal. (1 Kings xix:18.) He must have had severe tests of faith and much courage. It showed faith and devotion in hiding the Lord's prophets. Jezebel, the wicked idolatrous woman, used the civil power to kill off the true prophets. Her aim was to exterminate completely the men of God who stood for the truth. We find her mentioned in Revelation ii:20. There she is used to represent Rome, the harlot, and her spiritual fornication and idolatry. Rome, like Jezebel, has persecuted the Lord's servants and killed them. (Rev. xviii:24.) Jezebel had evidently left the palace of Samaria and was at Jezreel, but Ahab and Obadiah were still in Samaria making a survey of

the land. Then Obadiah met Elijah. The prophet requests Obadiah to announce his presence to Ahab. But Obadiah feared that such a message might cost him his life. Had not the whole country been searched for Elijah? And what, if the Spirit should carry Elijah away? Then he pleads his kindness to the hundred prophets whom he saved when murderous Jezebel slew the prophets. From all this we learn that Obadiah, pious and faithful, was full of fear and trembling. He and the other faithful ones in Israel during the dark days of Ahab and Jezebel typify that faithful remnant of Israel during the end of the present age, suffering and persecuted during the great tribulation. Ahab and Elijah met, and the prophet, clothed with power, rebuked the apostate King: "I have not troubled Israel; but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim." What would have happened if the daughter of Ethbaal, demon-possessed Jezebel, had been present? The great gathering suggested by Elijah would hardly have taken place. But she was in Jezreel and was ignorant of what was taking place. Ahab gathers all Israel and the 450 prophets of Baal upon Mount Carmel as demanded by Elijah. It is said that upon that mountain there stood two altars, one dedicated to Jehovah and another altar of Baal. This place Elijah chose for the vindication of Jehovah. To describe the scene, one of the grandest in the history of Israel, would take many pages. To his solid statement demanding decision—"How long halt ye between two opinions? If Jehovah is God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him"—the people had no answer. Then follows his great declaration as the only prophet of Jehovah, while 450 prophets of Baal stood over against him. Then the sacrifices are suggested "and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God." And all the people answered, it is well spoken. Then follows the wild crying of the prophets of Baal from early morning till noon; Elijah's sarcasm and the greater frenzy of the Baal worshippers. A wild scene followed. Crying louder and louder, they cut themselves with knives

and lancets till the blood flowed. But there was no answer and no voice. Then Elijah repaired the altar of Jehovah, that was broken down. What a reminder the twelve stones were with which he built the altar! The sacrifice had been put upon the altar with the wood. Three times the altar had been drenched with water, so that the trench was filled with water. And now the time for the evening sacrifice, that significant time had come. A simple prayer follows. Jehovah's vindication is demanded and that he is Jehovah's servant. "Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again." Then Jehovah answered by fire and everything was consumed. The people who witnessed the indescribable scene fell on their faces and cried: "The Lord He is God—the Lord He is God." Thus Jehovah manifested His power in the vindication of His Name and in answer to His servant's prayer; and the people were brought back to the confession of the Name of the Lord. His great mission to which the Lord had called him had been accomplished and the prophets of Baal, wicked and guilty as they were, received their deserved judgment. And here we have a foreshadowing of events to come. Apostasy from the Lord and from His Word is increasing. Before the age closes it will be universal, though the Lord will have a faithful remnant even in the dark days of the age. His Name is dishonored and rejected. But that blessed Name will be vindicated by a manifestation of His power in judgment. "For behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh; and the slain of the Lord shall be many." (Is. lxvi:15-16.)

Higher Criticism has not left these records unattacked. They speak of "The legendary narratives in which Elijah's history is enshrined." All is done to discredit these records and to make them appear doubtful. But the verdict given by these men who sit in judgment upon the Word of God, that the scene on Carmel is unhistorical, is a false verdict

which shows lack of real research. Nothing whatever can be brought forward to question the historicity of this great scene, while much confirms it.

Then follows Elijah's word to Ahab: "Get thee up, eat and drink, for there is a sound of abundance of rain." It was spoken in faith. The Lord had said to him: "I will send rain upon the earth." (xviii:1.) And then came his prayer. He knew the Lord's will and the Lord's promise, and then persevered in prayer, and when the answer was in sight then he exercised faith once more by sending a message to Ahab. Then the heaven was black with clouds and wind and there was a great rain. The hand of the Lord was also upon Elijah and he ran before Ahab's chariot to the entrance of Jezreel. It was supernatural power which sustained him. (Is. xl:31.)

3. Elijah in the Wilderness and upon Mount Horeb.

CHAPTER XIX

1. Elijah's Flight and Despondency. 1–8.
2. Upon Mount Horeb. 9–18.
3. Elisha called. 19–21.

Elijah perhaps stopped at the very door of the palace where wicked Jezebel dwelt. He would remain with Ahab to the very last before he went in to face the Queen. Should not Elijah have remained and gone even before Jezebel to hear his testimony? Instead he becomes terrified of wicked Jezebel. Had he hoped that what had taken place on Carmel would result in bringing not alone Ahab back to Jehovah, but also influence Jezebel? If such was his expectation he must have been bitterly disappointed. Jezebel seeks to kill him and he flees for his life. All what follows is the result of unbelief. This verifies James' statement in his epistle: "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are." Then in despair and unbelief he requested to die. He is altogether occupied with himself and did not look to God. Instead of seeking the wilderness, his

training school, to pour out his heart before God, to get new strength in communion with the Lord, "he requested for himself that he might die."

"The heart of Elijah and the hand of God led the prophet into the wilderness, where, overwhelmed perhaps, yet precious in Jehovah's sight, he will be alone with God. Elijah's forty days' journey in the wilderness has only a partial resemblance to the forty days which Moses spent with God, in the same Horeb to which the prophet was going, or to those which Jesus spent in the wilderness for conflict with the enemy of God and man. In the two latter cases nature was set aside. Neither Moses nor the Lord ate or drank. As for Elijah, the goodness of God sustains the weakness of tried nature, makes manifest that He considers it with all tenderness and thoughtfulness, and gives the strength needed for such a journey. This should have touched him, and made him feel what he ought to be in the midst of the people, since he had to do with such a God. His heart was far from such a state. Impossible, when we think of ourselves, to be witnesses to others of what God is! Our poor hearts are too far from such a position." *

In Mount Horeb the Lord spoke to him: "What doest thou here, Elijah?" It was the gentle rebuke of a loving God. He was not in the place where the Lord wanted him as His servant. It is a great contrast—Elijah on Mount Carmel and Elijah on Mount Horeb in a cave. On Carmel he stands the man of faith, filled with a holy zeal for Jehovah. On Horeb hidden in the cave because he fled from Jezebel. And how many children of God may learn something from this question: "What doest thou here?" They are drifting into the world while others have left the sphere of service into which the Lord called them. And Elijah's answer shows his self-occupation. It is what he had done; what he was and the threatening danger to lose his life. But that danger was far greater when they searched country-wide for him and when the Lord preserved his life by the ministry of the ravens and by the widow-woman.

* Synopsis of the Bible.

His answer has in it the spirit of bitterness and accusation. Then the Lord passed by. The storm, the earthquake and the fire preceded His Coming; these are always connected with Jehovah's presence and manifestation. Then came "a still small voice" Elijah knew so well. He wrapped his face in his mantle and then he answered the question once more, but in an humbled spirit. He receives the commission to anoint Hazael, King of Syria; Jehu ("Jehovah is he"), the son of Nimshi ("Jehovah reveals"), he is to anoint King of Israel and Elisha is to be his successor. All three are called as instruments of judgment upon Israel's idolatry and the house of Ahab. Then the Lord announced that He had a faithful remnant of 7000 in Israel who had not bowed the knee unto Baal. (See its prophetic meaning in Romans xi:3-6.)

4. King Ahab; his wicked Reign and End.

Chapters xx-xxii.

CHAPTER XX

AHAB'S WAR WITH THE SYRIANS AND HIS VICTORY

1. The Siege and Relief of Samaria. 1–21.
2. The Victory at Aphek. 22–34.
3. A prophet's symbolical action and his message. 35–43.

Two expeditions of Ben-hadad ("Son of the Sun") against Israel are recorded in this chapter. When Ben-hadad forced the war and insulted the King of Israel, Ahab prepared for the battle. Then a prophet came to Ahab, most likely one of those who had been hidden by Obadiah. He brought a message from the Lord. "Thus saith Jehovah, Hast thou seen all this great multitude? behold I will deliver it into thine hand this day; and thou shalt know that I am Jehovah." From this we may gather that a spiritual revival must have taken place in Israel after the manifestation of Jehovah on Carmel. Jezebel, after her rage on account of Elijah's deed, is not mentioned again

till after Ahab's failure. The Lord in graciousness gave to Ahab another evidence that He is the Lord and can smite the enemies of Israel. The Syrians were defeated. Another message came to Ahab through the prophet. A year later Ben-hadad made another expedition against Israel. "And there came a man of God, and spake unto the King of Israel, and said, Thus saith Jehovah, because the Syrians have said, The Lord is the God of the hills but not the God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into their hand, and ye shall know that I am the Lord." A great victory followed at Aphek. But Ahab let Ben-hadad, who had defied Jehovah, live. More than that he treated him like a friend and brother, had him come into his chariot and made a covenant with him. In showing such clemency to the enemy of God, Ahab revealed the state of his soul. He had no heart for the Lord and was bound to follow his wicked ways.

Then one of the sons of the prophets (Josephus saith it was Micaiah; xxii:8) was commanded by the Lord to ask another prophet to smite him. The prophet refused the unquestioning obedience demanded from a prophet and therefore the judgment of God overtook him. The purpose of God in bringing the judgment message home to Ahab is carried out nevertheless. Then Ahab pronounced his own doom for showing leniency to Ben-hadad.

CHAPTER XXI

NABOTH'S VINEYARD

1. Naboth's Refusal. 1–4.
2. Jezebel's wicked deed. 5–16.
3. Elijah pronounces divine judgment. 17–24.
4. Ahab's wickedness and confession. 25–27.
5. The Lord's mercy. 28–29.

No comment is needed on the story of Naboth's vineyard. Jezebel, the wicked, and Ahab's submission to her was his ruination. On her Satanic suggestion one of the most wicked deeds recorded in Bible history is done. Naboth is

murdered to obtain his vineyard. The measure of Ahab's apostasy and wickedness is now filled to overflowing. For the wicked King the tidings of Naboth's death were welcome tidings. No inquiry follows, but in self-satisfaction he goes to take possession of the beautiful vineyard of Naboth. But his enjoyment, as it is always with the enjoyment of sin, did not last very long. No sooner had the innocent blood been spilt, but Jehovah, who saw and knew the foul deed, sent Elijah with the final message of doom and judgment for the guilty pair. Ahab was still in the vineyard. His eyes still feasted on the beautiful scene before him. His thoughts were occupied with the pleasures of sin when suddenly Elijah appeared. "I have found thee," were the prophet's first utterances. "Be sure your sin will find you out." Then follows the sentence already indicated in the words of the disguised prophet in the previous chapter. "I will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Abijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked me to anger, and made Israel to sin. And of Jezebel also spake the Lord, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat." How literally this sentence was carried out we shall find in the subsequent history. But Ahab having humbled himself hears a merciful message from Elijah's lips. "Because he humbled himself before me, I will not bring evil in his days, but in his son's days will I bring evil upon his house." How merciful the Lord is to all who humble themselves!

CHAPTER XXII

THE DEATH OF AHAB

1. Jehoshaphat and Ahab. 1–12.
2. The Prophet Micaiah. 13–28.
3. The Battle and Ahab's death. 29–40.
4. Jehoshaphat of Judah. 41–50. (2 Chron. xix-xx.)
5. Ahaziah, King of Israel. 51–53.

Three years passed without war between Syria and Israel. In the third year Jehoshaphat of Judah came down to Ahab. Jehoshaphat's son and heir-apparent had married Athaliah the daughter of Ahab. An unholy alliance had therefore been formed between the royal families. Jehoshaphat, who knew better, was in this very unfaithful, and though the Lord did not forsake him chastisements came upon him and his house. The prophet Jehu, son of Hanani, met him after he came back from the battle of Ramoth-Gilead and said to him: "Shouldst thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? Therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord." (2 Chron. xix:2.) Ahab, under the predicted judgment of God, asked Jehoshaphat: "Wilt thou go with me to battle to Ramoth-Gilead?" And gladly the good King of Judah answers: "I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses." And Ahab in all his wicked apostasy had prophets, four hundred of them. Jehoshaphat was, no doubt, troubled in his conscience, and demanded that Ahab inquire of the Lord. The prophets he had used no longer the name of Baal, but the name of Jehovah. And they all prophesied success. Jehoshaphat, however, was suspicious and asked for a prophet of the Lord. From this we may gather that there was something about them by which the King of Judah knew that they were not Jehovah's prophets. Ahab then sent for Micaiah the son of Imlah. Both Kings occupied thrones and were clad in their robes in the entrance of the gate of Samaria. All the false prophets prophesied and one Zedekiah made horns of iron to produce a vivid impression of the coming victory.

Then Micaiah appeared. The faithful prophet tells the Kings what he had seen. It is a revelation he had. Jehovah permitted a lying spirit to possess Ahab's false prophets and they were prophesying lies. And Micaiah predicted the defeat of Israel. The words of Micaiah are of much importance. What happened in Ahab's day, when the Lord permitted a lying spirit to deceive and lead the wicked into ruin, will happen again at the close of this present age. God will send a strong delusion that they should believe a lie. (2 Thess. ii.) Unclean spirits will then be on the earth, even as they begin already and by lying words, lying miracles and signs, lead the Christ-rejecting masses into judgment.

Then the battle. Ahab disguised himself and Jehoshaphat wore his robes. It was more than cowardice in Ahab; he feared the judgment which was hovering over him and tried to avert the coming fatal stroke. Jehoshaphat was almost miraculously saved, but Ahab was miraculously killed. A soldier drew a bow at venture. That arrow was guided by a higher hand. It found the disguised King of Israel. It found the small opening in the King's harness. A little while later the dogs were licking his blood as they washed his blood stained chariot. Thus the word of the Lord was fulfilled. Jehoshaphat's full record we shall consider in Chronicles and Azariah's in the beginning of the Second book of Kings.

SECOND KINGS

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The Division of the Second Book of Kings.

The Second Book of Kings is a continuation of the history of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah up to the time of the captivities. As stated in the introduction to the Book of Kings, both books were originally undivided. In the opening chapters Elijah the Prophet is seen once more in his final ministrations, followed by his translation. Then Elisha comes upon the scene. In and through his ministry and miracles Jehovah manifested His power in behalf of His people. It was Jehovah's gracious appeal to Israel to return unto Him. The history of decline and apostasy in Israel and Judah follows after that. The house of Israel was first carried into captivity through Assyria. In the Kingdom of Judah a revival took place under Hezekiah, which was followed by a reaction under Manasseh and Amon. After Josiah's reform and death Judah's doom was sealed. The book ends with the record of the siege of Jerusalem and the captivity. Hosea and Amos exercised their prophetic offices in the northern Kingdom, while Isaiah, Jeremiah, Joel, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah were the prophets of Judah. Ezekiel prophesied among the captives, while Daniel was in Babylon. The division of this second part of the Book of Kings is therefore easily made.

I. **ELIJAH'S FINAL MINISTRY AND TRANSLATION.** Chapter i–ii:11.

1. **Elijah and Ahaziah.** Chapter i.
2. **Elijah's Translation.** Chapter ii:11.

II. THE PROPHET ELISHA. Chapter ii:12–ix:10.
1. The Beginning of His Ministry. Chapter ii:12–25.
2. Jehoram, Moab and Elisha. Chapter iii.
3. The Miracles. Chapter iv.
4. Naaman and His Healing. Chapter v.
5. Elisha and the Syrians. Chapter vi.
6. Elisha's Prediction and its Fulfilment. Chapter vii.
7. The Famine Predicted. Further Events. Chapter viii.
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III. THE PERIOD OF DECLENSION AND APOSTASY. Chapters ix:11–xvii.
1. Jehu, King of Israel. His deeds. Chapter ix:11–37.
2. Jehu's Judgments. The Baal-worship Destroyed. Jehu's Death. Chapter x.
3. Athaliah; Jehoida's Revival. Chapter xi.
4. Jehoash. The Temple Repaired. The Death of Jehoash. Chapter xii.
5. Jehoahaz and Jehoash. The Death of Elisha. Chapter xiii.
6. Kings of Israel and Judah. Chapter xiv–xv.
7. King Ahaz and Assyria. Chapter xvi.
8. Assyria Conquers Israel. The Captivity. Chapter xvii.

IV. THE REIGN OF HEZEKIAH, MANASSEH AND AMON. Chapters xviii–xxi.
1. Hezekiah and Sennacherib's Invasion. Chapter xviii.
2. Hezekiah and Isaiah. The Deliverance. Chapter xix.
3. Hezekiah's Illness, Recovery, Failure and Death. Chapter xx.
4. Manasseh and Amon. Chapter xxi.

V. **THE REIGN OF JOSIAH.** Chapters xxii–xxiii:30.

1. **The Revival.** Chapter xxii.
2. **The Results of the Revival. The Death of Josiah.** Chapter xxiii:30.

VI. **THE FINAL APOSTASY OF JUDAH AND THE CAPTIVITY.** Chapters xxiii:31–xxv.

1. **Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim.** Chapter xxiii:31–37.
2. **Jehoiahin and Zedekiah. The Beginning of Judah's Captivity.** Chapter xxiv.
3. **The Siege of Jerusalem and Judah's Complete Overthrow.** Chapter xxv.

Analysis and Annotations

I. Elijah's Final Ministry and Translation

Chapters i–ii:11

1. Elijah and Ahaziah

CHAPTER I

1. Moab's Rebellion. 1.
2. The Illness of Ahaziah. 2.
3. Elijah's Message. 3–8.
4. Ahaziah's Messengers and their Fate. 9–15.
5. Elijah before the King. Ahaziah's Death. 16–17.
6. Jehoram becomes King. 18.

The rebellion of Moab is here briefly mentioned. Both Omri and Ahab had oppressed Moab, and after Ahab's death this rebellion took place. The complete report is found in the third chapter. That ancient monument known by the name of the Moabite stone contains a most interesting record of this revolt and the oppression by Omri and his son Ahab. This record is as follows: "Omri (was) King of Israel, and he oppressed Moab many days, for Chemosh (Moab's idol-god) was angry with his land. His son (Ahab) followed him, and he also said, I will oppress Moab."* However, if it were not for the Bible no one would know that the inscription on the Moabite stone is truthful. The Bible proves the record genuine, and not the record the genuineness of the Biblical account. The Bible does not need such confirmation.

Ahaziah, the wicked son of a wicked father, had an accident and sent his messenger to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron. Baal-zebub means "Lord of flies." Accord-

*See Appendix on page 365 for a complete translation of the record on this monument.

ing to rabbinical tradition, he was worshipped in the form of a fly; and so addicted were the Jews to this cult that they carried a small image in their pockets, kissing it from time to time. Vile practices were also connected with its worship. What awful blasphemy the Pharisees uttered when they accused our Lord of using Beelzebub, the prince of demons!*

The messengers of Ahaziah never reached Ekron. The Lord had heard the charge to the King's messengers and He sent a messenger (angel means in Hebrew "a messenger") to Elijah the Tishbite. The angel of the Lord commanded the Prophet to meet the men the King had sent forth to inquire of Baal-zebub and to announce the coming death of Ahaziah. The message is faithfully delivered; the messengers return to Ahaziah and he heard the words of Elijah from their lips. He knew at once who the mysterious person was who had turned back his messengers. The King sent therefore a captain with his fifty men to arrest the prophet. The captain addressed Elijah as a "Man of God" and commanded him in the name of the King to come down from the hill. But Elijah, fearless as he was, took up the word of the captain and appealed to his God to let fire come down from heaven. It was at once carried out and the captain with his fifty men were consumed by fire. The same fate overtook the second expedition, whose captain urged the prophet's obedience more than the first, for he said, "Come down quickly." The judicial character of Elijah's ministry is here once more in evidence. Critics have more than once condemned his action and called him "arrogant and merciless," while others deny the historicity of the event altogether. "Terrible as this answer was, we can perceive its suitableness, nay, its necessity, since it was to decide, and that publicly and by the way of judgment (and no other decision would have been suitable in a contest between man and God), whose was the power and the

*Matt. xii:24. Beelzebub is given in the Greek as Beelzebul, which means "Lord of idolatrous sacrificing."

kingdom—and this at the great critical epoch of Israel's history."* Compare this fire judgment with Luke ix:54–56.† When this present dispensation of Grace is ended, judgment by fire will be meted out to the enemies of God (Rev. xi:5). During the great tribulation (Matt. xxiv:22) the fiery judgments will be on the earth (Rev. viii:5), preceding the visible manifestation of the Lord, who shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess. i:7–8).

A third company was sent out by Ahaziah. Mercy was shown to this captain and his fifty men, for the captain feared God and honored Elijah as His representative. His words breathe humility and his prayer showed that he owned the power of God. Such mercy is also in store for those who humble themselves when the coming judgments are in the earth. Then Elijah appeared before Ahaziah in person and delivered the God-given message and the wicked King died according to the Word of the Lord.

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*History of Israel.

†Elijah could consistently command fire to come down from heaven and consume those who dishonored and despised in him the prophet and servant of God. But when the disciples of Jesus, in a similar case (Luke ix:54–56) desired to imitate that example, the Lord restrained them, and said: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." Elijah here acted as the representative of the Law, which showed no indulgence, but the disciples of Christ were the representatives of the Gospel which proclaims the remission of sins. The old covenant necessarily alarmed and subdued the enemies of the kingdom of God by minatory language and punitive measures, while the new covenant designed to disarm and, if possible, to win them by forgiving love.—*Kurtz.*

2. Elijah's Translation.

CHAPTER II:1–11

1. From Gilgal to Jordan. 1–6.
2. The Divided Jordan. 7–8.
3. Elisha's Request. 9–10.
4. Elijah Goes Up to Heaven in a Whirlwind. 11.

The time for Elijah's departure had now come, and the Lord, whom he had served so faithfully, "would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind." As Lord He graciously orders the time and the manner of the departure of His servants (John xxi:18–21). His coming translation was known to him, to Elisha and to the sons of the prophets. The latter belonged to the schools of the prophets.*

The goodness and power of God was now to be manifested in taking him into heaven without passing through death. The Jewish synagogue and the church have always

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*"The 'schools of the prophets,' which were placed under the direction of experienced and approved prophets, afforded to younger men an opportunity of becoming qualified to perform the duties of the prophetic calling. The selection and the admission of individuals who were suited for the prophetic office by their personal character, and who had a divine call, undoubtedly depended on the prophetic judgment of those who presided over these institutions. As prophecy was a gift and not an art, the instructions which were imparted, probably referred merely to the study of the law, and were intended to awaken and cultivate theocratical sentiments, as well as promote a growth in spiritual life, for herein a suitable preparation for the prophetic office necessarily consisted. There are also indications found which authorize us to conclude that the revival of sacred poetry, as an art, and that theocratic-historical composition also, are to be ascribed to these religious communities as their source. Such schools existed in Ramah, Jericho, Beth-el, and Gilgal (1 Sam. xix:18; 2 Kings ii:3, 5; iv:38). Those who frequented them, had, usually, reached the age of manhood already, and in some cases, were married men. They lived together in a society or community, which often embraced a large number of members, and were occasionally employed as prophetic messengers by their teachers. (2 Kings ix:1.) However, the prophets were not invariably trained in these schools; several are named who were taken at once from civil life and invested with the prophetic office."—*Sacred History.*

believed the record of his departure, but it has been reserved to the destructive criticism to deny the translation of Elijah. The following statements are taken from Canon F. W. Farrar's exposition of the Second Book of Kings. "Knowing that he was on his way to death, Elijah felt the imperious instinct which leads the soul to seek solitude at the supreme crisis of life." "His death, like that of Moses, was surrounded by mystery and miracles, and we can say nothing further about it." How strange that a scholar and expositor can speak twice of the death of Elijah, when the record so clearly establishes the fact that he was taken up into heaven in a whirlwind and that he did not die at all!

He appeared with Moses when our Lord was transfigured. According to Peter's inspired comment the transfiguration scene foreshadows the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter i:16–21). As He stood in glorious majesty upon that mountain so will He come to this earth once more and bring His saints with Him. Moses is the representative of those saints, who died and are raised from the dead; Elijah represents that company, who will be caught in clouds to meet the Lord in the air, departing from the earth without dying (1 Cor. xv:51–53; 1 Thess. iv:13–18).

Elisha clings close to Elijah. He had previously cast his mantle (the symbol of the prophetic office) upon Elisha, and he was then not quite ready to follow him fully.* But now we see Elisha following Elijah from Gilgal to Bethel, from Bethel to Jericho, and from Jericho to Jordan. He proves himself worthy of the mantle, to exercise the holy office as the prophet of the Lord. He covets in answer to Elijah's request a double portion† of the spirit which was upon Elijah to rest upon him. Elijah's answer is conditional. If Elisha saw Elijah taken up into heaven, it should be so, and if not, then his request was not to be granted. And

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*1 Kings xix:19–20. Compare with Luke ix:62.

† According to the marginal reading the portion of the first born son, which was twice as much as that of the other sons (Deut. xxi:17).

while they yet talked the chariot of fire, and horses of fire appeared and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. The chariot of fire with its horses of fire were the symbol of the presence of the Lord of Hosts (Psalm civ:3–4; Isa. lxvi:15; Hab. iii:8), but Elijah went up by the whirlwind. We know he was translated; he passed on without dying, but the details of it are not made known.

Elisha following Elijah, his request and the vision of glory, are suggestive about true service for God. Only as we follow the Lord wholly, as Elisha followed Elijah, and look to the coming glory, are we fit and fitted for service.

II. The Prophet Elisha

Chapters ii:12–ix:10

1. The Beginning of His Ministry.

CHAPTER II:12–25

1. The Mantle Used. 12–14.
2. The Sons of the Prophets. 15–18.
3. The Healing of Jericho's Waters. 19–22.
4. Judgment Upon the Scoffers. 23–25.

Both Elijah and Elisha are types of our Lord Jesus Christ. Their names indicate this. Elijah means "my God is Jehovah," and Elisha, "my God is salvation." Suffering, affliction and rejection are prominent in the life of Elijah, but it ended for him by being taken into heaven. It foreshadows the path of Him who was rejected by His own, cast out by the world and who has gone to heaven. In Elisha and his ministry, sovereign grace towards Israel in apostasy and ripening for judgment, is the predominant feature, foreshadowing Him who appeared in the midst of His people, ministering grace and truth (John i:14, 18).*

*Another typical application is to look upon Elisha's ministry as typifying what will be bestowed upon Israel and upon the Gentiles with the Return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Elisha had seen Elijah's departure into heaven, and when he saw him no more "he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces." He thus expressed his grief, but at the same time he took Elijah's mantle (symbolical of the prophetic ministry, which had fallen upon him) and used it at once. He smites with it the waters of Jordan and the Lord God of Elijah answers faith by parting the river. It was the first miracle of his administration. "So shall the waters of difficulty, nay, the cold flood of death itself, part, if we smite in faith with the heaven given garment; so shall the promise of God ever stand sure, and God be true to His Word; and so may we go forward undauntedly, though humbly and prayerfully, to whatever work He gives us to do."*

The sons of the prophets then acknowledged Elisha. They are seen ever after in close fellowship with the prophet; they belonged to the faithful remnant in Israel. However, not having witnessed Elijah's translation they were unbelieving and thought that the Spirit might have transported the prophet (1 Kings xviii:12; Ezek. iii:14, viii:3). They were not obedient to Elisha's command and urged him to send, till he was ashamed and yielded to their request. After a three days' unsuccessful search they returned and now they had to be ashamed, when their master told them, "Did I not say unto you, Go not?" They were like the disciples of our Lord "slow to believe."

The second miracle is one of mercy, followed by a miracle of judgment. The healing of Jericho's waters is a miracle of much significance. Jericho is a type of the world under the curse (Joshua vi). The water was naught and the ground barren. A new cruse with salt is brought. The salt is put into the waters and the prophet said: "Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land." When He, who is greater than Elisha, comes back to this earth again, now under the curse and death reigning upon it,

*Edersheim.

the curse will be removed; there will be healing as it was for Jericho. The other miracles of grace and mercy teach the same lesson.

The third miracle is one of judgment. Judgment well deserved fell upon those who despised the chosen messenger of God. The mockers were not "little children," but young men. They were of Bethel, and no doubt associated with the wicked worship established there (1 Kings xii:25–33). They were infidels and scoffers. They mocked the translation of Elijah and daunted Elisha. The curse of the Lord fell upon them. Forty-two of their number were torn by she-bears. The punishment has been declared by critics "disproportionate to the offence." It certainly is not when the offence is considered as an insult to the Man of God, who had gone to heaven and to the prophet who had taken his place; besides, these the young men had scoffed at the power of God. And we must not overlook the fact that present day mockers and rejectors of the ministry of the Gospel and Grace of God will also receive their punishment in due time (2 Peter iii:3–7).

2. Jehoram, Moab and Elisha.

CHAPTER III

1. Jehoram, King of Israel. 1–3.
2. Moab's Rebellion. 4–9.
3. Elisha's Message and Prediction. 10–20.
4. The Defeat of Moab. 21–27.

In chapter i:17 we read, "And Jehoram reigned in his stead (Ahaziah) in the second year of Jehoram,* the son of Jehoshaphat, King of Judah." There was, therefore, a Jehoram King over Judah, as well as a King of Israel by the same name. They are also known by the name Joram. Joram and Jehoram are used interchangeably. In 2 Kings i:17 and 2 Chron. xxii:6 both Kings are called Jehoram; in

*He was associated with his father in the government of the kingdom (2 Kings viii:27; 2 Chron. xxi:5).

2 Kings ix:15, 17, the King of Israel is called Jehoram; in 2 Kings viii:21, etc., the King of Judah is called Joram; comparing 2 Kings viii:16 and verse 29 we find these two names inverted. We mention this to clear up a possible difficulty some may find here. Jehoram was another son of Ahab, the brother of Ahaziah. A partial reformation was attempted by him, but he continued in the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat (1 Kings xii:25–33).

The full record of Moab's rebellion is now given. Jehoram formed an alliance with Jehoshaphat, the King of Judah and the King of Edom. Jehoshaphat had been in league with Ahab (1 Kings xxii) and now we see him in a similar alliance with Ahab's second son. It was an alliance displeasing to the Lord and Jehoshaphat was troubled in his conscience about it. The same question he had put to Ahab, he now puts to Ahab's son, "Is there not here a prophet of the Lord, that we may inquire of the Lord by him?" (1 Kings xxii:7). Jehoshaphat knew the Lord, but was in evil company. When the three Kings met in Elisha's tent, the prophet manifests the boldness of Elijah in rebuking the wicked King of Israel. But he honors the King of Judah. "As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the King of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee." But there was also a rebuke for the good King of Judah. The Spirit of God was grieved and Elisha had not the power of prophecy. He needed a minstrel first to calm his own agitated spirit and get into the condition of soul to utter the needed message. How it should have humbled the King, who served Jehovah, that after calling for a prophet of the Lord, the divine mouthpiece was unable to prophesy at once! Unholy alliances hindered the manifestation of the Spirit of God. Such is the case almost everywhere in our days of departure from the truth of God.

Then the ditches which had been made in obedience to the command given through Elijah were miraculously filled with water. On the next morning the Moabites saw the

water and imagined that it was blood, on account of the reflection from the rising sun. "And they said, This is blood; the Kings are surely slain, and they have smitten one another, now therefore Moab to the spoil." The onrushing Moabites were met by the Israelites and Elisha's prediction was fulfilled in the defeat of the Moabites and the devastation of their own land. It was the supernatural gift of water "when the meal-offering was offered" which led to the defeat of the enemy and the victory for Israel. And God has supplied the water of life through Him who is the true meal offering.

Kir-hareseth* alone was left intact, all other cities were raised, all wells stopped up and every good tree cut down. On the devastation of Moab remarks a commentator, that the spirit of the times must be considered and that the half barbaric nations of that time all did this. But could the devastation of Moab hundreds of years before Christ have been any worse than the devastation of Belgium, Poland and Galicia in the twentieth century after Christ?

Then in despair the King of Moab did the horrible thing of sacrificing his eldest son, the one to reign after him. He offered him upon the wall, in plain sight of Israel, as a burnt offering, to conciliate his god Chemosh, who is mentioned on the Moabite stone (see Appendix).

3. The Miracles.

CHAPTER IV.

1. The Widow's Oil Multiplied. 1–7.
2. The Shunammite and Her Reward. 8–17.
3. The Son of the Shunammite Raised from the Dead. 18–37.
4. The Deadly Pottage Healed. 38–41.
5. The Multitude Fed. 42–44.

In the previous chapter Elisha appeared as the saviour of Israel, and now he acts in behalf of the widow of one of the sons of the prophets. His name is not given. Elisha

* Kir-hareseth is repeatedly mentioned as the stronghold of Moab (Isaiah xvi:7).

had known him as one who feared the Lord. And now the widow deeply in debt, about to lose her two sons, appealed to the prophet. In answer to Elisha's question what she had in her house she told him that her whole possession consisted in a pot of oil.* She then was told to borrow empty vessels, not a few. Behind closed doors she was to pour out. All the borrowed vessels were soon filled and when the empty vessels were all filled and no other to be filled, the oil stayed. The oil was to be sold to satisfy the creditor and the rest to be used to sustain the widow and her sons. The Lord is the father of the widows and heareth their cry; this is beautifully illustrated in this miracle. Then there is the lesson for faith. The vessels had to be produced to be filled; if there had been more vessels the oil would have filled them all. The limitation was not in the supply of oil, but in the empty vessels to receive the oil. There is an abundance of grace and in faith we can always come with our empty vessels to receive out of His fulness grace upon grace.

Then the great woman of Shunem† is introduced for the first time. She belonged to the godly in Israel and did not know the prophet, but it did not take her long to discover that he was a holy man of God. It is a blessed picture to see this man of God walking through the land, possessing nothing and acting in grace in the midst of Israel's ruin. In the words of another, "Poor indeed, while making many rich; seeming to possess all things, yet really having nothing. Receiving bounty and care in the ordinary need of life from those in whose behalf he, at the same time, is opening resources which were altogether beyond man. And, besides, he walks alone in the world, and yet all wait on him.

"All this gives us a strong expression of the ways of One who could call Himself Master and Lord, receiving the homage of faith, even while He had not where to lay His head. In all this our prophet is marking out for us, as in a

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*In Hebrew: Anointing Oil.

†Abishag (1 Kings i:3) was of Shunem.

reflection, the path of the Lord Jesus in one of its most striking, remarkable characters."*

The pious Shunammite prepared for the lonely pilgrim a little chamber with its simple furnishings in her own house. And the man of God appreciated the kindness shown to him, and, learning that she had no son, Elisha told her "about this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son." Like Sarah she believed and received her son. And when the child died, what faith the Shunammite exhibited! The son of promise was dead, yet in the midst of her great sorrow she could say, "It is well." Like Abraham, when he put the son of promise upon the altar, the Shunammite counted on resurrection and believed on Him who can raise the dead. She had lost her son for a while, but not her faith.

And how her faith clings to Elisha! Not Gehazi with the staff can help, but Elisha is needed. And her faith is rewarded. Her child is raised from the dead. The Holy Spirit mentions her in the New Testament. "Women received their dead raised to life again" (Heb. xi:35).

"We see in her a true and faithful Israelitish woman, who, in a time of general apostasy, owned Jehovah alike in her life and her home. Receiving a prophet, because of Him who had sent him, because he was a holy man of God—and with humility and entire self-forgetfulness—she received a prophet's reward in the gift most precious to a Jewish mother, which she had not dared to hope for, even when announced to her. Then, when severely tried, she still held fast to her trust in the promise—strong even when weakest—once more self-forgetful, and following deepest spiritual impulse. And, in the end, her faith appears victorious—crowned by Divine mercy, and shining out the more brightly from its contrast to the felt weakness of the prophet. As we think of this, it seems as if a fuller light were shed on the history of the trials of an Abraham, an Isaac, or a Jacob; on the inner life of those heroes of faith to whom the Epistle of the Hebrews

*J. Bellett.

points us for example and learning (Heb. xi), and on such Scripture sayings as these: 'Jehovah killeth, and maketh alive: He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up' (1 Sam. ii:6); 'Know that Jehovah hath set apart him that is godly for Himself: Jehovah will hear when I call unto Him' (Psalm iv:3); or this: 'All the paths of Jehovah are mercy and truth unto such as keep His covenant and His testimonies' (Psalm xxv:10)."*

And here we must also think of Him, whom Elisha but faintly foreshadows. He raises the spiritually dead now, all who hear His voice, as He will raise the physically dead in the future.

In Gilgal the eighth miracle of Elisha took place. The humble pottage which was being prepared for the sons of the prophets had been spoiled by the addition of a wild and poisonous gourd. Then Elisha cast meal into the pot and the pottage became eatible—"there was no harm in the pot." The meal is typical of our Lord, who was cast into the scene of death and through His death hath brought healing.

The miraculous feeding of the multitude was Elisha's ninth miracle; prefigures the miracles of our Lord (Matt. xiv:19–21, etc.).

4. Naaman and His Healing.

CHAPTER V

1. Naaman, the Leper. 1.
2. The Testimony of the Maid of Israel. 2–4.
3. The Message to the King of Israel. 5–8.
8. Naaman and Elisha. 9–19.
9. Gehazi; His Sin and Punishment. 20–27.

The story of this chapter is peculiarly rich in its spiritual and dispensational meaning. Naaman, captain of Ben-hadad, the King of Syria, was a Gentile. He was no common man. In all his greatness and might, with all the

*Bible History.

honors heaped upon him and wealth at his command, he was an unhappy and doomed man, for he was a leper. Leprosy is a type of sin. Here, then, is a picture of the natural man, enjoying the highest and the best—but withal a leper. And then the little captive, taken from Israel's land, away from her home and her family—what a contrast with the great Naaman! In her captivity she was happy, for she knew the Lord and knew that the prophet in Samaria, the great representative of Jehovah, could heal leprosy. She knew and she believed. The grace which filled the heart gave her also a desire to see the mighty Naaman healed; the same grace gave her power to bear witness.

And how the Lord used the simple testimony! The King of Syria heard of it and addressed a letter to the King of Israel demanding that he should recover Naaman from his leprosy. And Naaman departed with ten talents of silver (about $18,000) and six thousand pieces of gold (about $40,000), besides ten changes of raiment." And the King of Israel, Jehoram, no doubt, was filled with fear, for he thought the King of Syria was seeking a pretext to quarrel with him. While he readily acknowledged that God alone has the power to heal, he did not look to the Lord nor did he think of the mighty prophet, whose very name declared that God is salvation. In helpless and hopeless terror, in the despair of unbelief he rent his clothes.

It was then that the man of God spoke reproving the King, asking that Naaman come to him. Then Naaman, with his horses and chariot, laden with the treasures, stood at the door of the house of Elisha. The prophet through a messenger told the leper, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." Well may we think here of our Lord Jesus, who cleansed the leper, and in doing so manifested Himself as Jehovah. But how He shines above all!

"When the leper comes to Him, it is not as with the King, 'Am I God, that I should heal a man of his leprosy?' nor is it as with the prophet, 'Go wash in Jordan, and be clean.' No; but He reveals Himself at once in the place and power

of God. 'I will be thou clean.' Elisha was but a preacher of Jesus to Naaman; the Lord Jesus was the lepers' cleansing, the healing God. Elisha did not venture to touch the leper. This would have defiled him. But our Lord 'put forth His hand and touched him'; for He, with the rights of the God of Israel, was above the leper, and could consume and not contract the defilement."*

And Naaman's wrath and indignation was stirred by Elisha's command. The great and mighty captain with his treasures expected a different reception from the prophet. He expected at least to do what heathen priests with their enchantments did, to call on the name of the Lord his God and strike his hand over the place of leprosy. He rejects the remedy which grace had provided because it humbled him into the dust and stripped him of all his pride. It is just this the sinner needs. Naaman had to learn that he was nothing but a poor, lost leper. All his silver and gold could not purchase cleansing for him. He needed humiliation and the obedience of faith. And so he learned as his servants reasoned with him, and instead of returning in a rage to Damascus as the helpless leper, he obeyed the given command and dipped himself seven times in Jordan—"and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean." Jordan is the type of death, as we saw in the study of Joshua. Our Lord was baptized by John in that river, for He had come to take the sinners place in death. Naaman bathing in Jordan typifies death and resurrection in which there is cleansing and healing for the spiritual leper, but it is the death and resurrection of our blessed Lord. As we believe on Him who died for our sins according to Scripture, and was raised for our justification, we are born again and made clean. It is the one way of salvation, the only way, revealed in every portion of God's holy Word. "Saved by grace through faith (in Him who died for our sins), it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast."

*J. G. Bellett.

And the blessed results of true salvation are seen at once in Naaman the Syrian. He is fully restored and healed. He stands now before the man of God, no longer the proud, self-trusting Naaman, but an humble believer. He confesses the Lord with his lips. He offers also a gift* to Elisha. He could not give anything to effect his cleansing, but after the healing he offered willingly. But Elisha refused the reward offered to him. He had freely received and freely he gave (Matt. x:8). Then he requested "two mules' burden of earth." This was to be used to build an altar unto Jehovah in Syria. It was an outward expression of his faith and would be a testimony among the heathen that there is but one Lord to be worshipped. And there was the tender conscience (verse 18). Finally he departed in peace. "Go in peace"; the same words our blessed Lord used repeatedly. And Gehazi's covetousness earned him the leprosy from which grace had delivered the Syrian Gentile. The story is full of solemn lessons.

Dispensationally Naaman stands for the Gentiles. Through Him who is greater than Elisha salvation has been extended to the Gentiles, while Gehazi, who was so closely connected with Elisha, but who had hardened his heart, is a type of Israel.

5. Elisha and the Syrians.

CHAPTER VI

1. The Lost Axe-head Recovered. 1–7.
2. Elisha makes Known Ben-hadad's plans. 8–12.
3. Elisha's Arrest Planned. 13–17.
4. The Blinded Syrians Led to Samaria. 18–23.
6. Samaria Besieged. 24–30.
6. The King's Wrath Against Elisha. 31–33.

It has been truly said that the miracle of the swimming axe-head reveals the condescension of divine power and the grace of benevolence. We see the great Man of God

*"A blessing" means a gift.

in fellowship with the sons of the prophets. He goes with them and when they are in distress the power of God is manifested through him. Rationalistic critics have always ridiculed the miracle of the swimming iron. "The story is perhaps an imaginative reproduction of some unwonted incident," saith Farrar, the higher critic. Then he adds, "all the eternal laws of nature are here superseded at a word, as though it were an every day matter, without even any recorded invocation of Jehovah, to restore an axe-head, which could obviously have been recovered or resupplied in some less stupendous way than by making iron swim on the surface of a swift-flowing river."* And Ewald, the German critic, explains, "he threw on to the spot where it had sunk a piece of wood cut to fit it, which caught it up"! These men all aim at the denial of miracles of any kind. They delight in making an omnipotent God, in whom they profess to believe, a helpless slave to the laws of nature, a God who has neither power nor inclination to set aside these laws in behalf of His trusting people. We say it again, the rationalistic critic is an unbeliever of the worst type.

There is much comfort for God's trusting children in the miracle of the swimming iron. The mighty power of God condescends to help those who trust even in the smallest things of life. Our Lord fills the throne in Glory and is the upholder of all things, yet as the sympathizing priest He enters into the lives of His people. His power answers faith, if we but learn to bring our little troubles to Him as the man came in distress to Elisha.

When war broke out between Ben-hadad and the King of Israel, Elisha made known the secret counsels of the King of Syria. The Man of God, walking in constant fellowship with Jehovah, received this supernatural information, and thereby an additional evidence was given to apostate Israel that the Lord is for His people and a very present help in time of trouble. Then one of Ben-hadad's

*Expositor's Bible.

servants* suggested that it was Elisha's work, and the King in his blindness sent a great host to capture Elisha. What Ahaziah attempted with Elijah (chapter i), Ben-hadad now undertakes with Elisha. But Elisha, who acts in grace, does not call down fire from heaven to devour the men who compassed Dothan. Elisha's servant (not Gehazi) is terror stricken when he beheld the besieging host. Elisha knows no fear, for he knows "they that are with us are more than they that be with them." He had seen the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof before (chapter ii:2). He knew that the Lord's hosts compassed him about. He did not need to pray for himself, that he might see, for he saw, because he believed. He prayed for his servant that his eyes might be opened. Then the servant saw, "and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots round about Elisha." Angelic ministry and protection may be termed one of the lost comforts which God's people have. They are still "ministering spirits to minister unto the heirs of salvation."

"I doubt not, a host or constellation of angels, those heavenly creatures, which, excelling in strength, stand in the presence of God, or go forth to minister on account of those who are heirs of salvation. For of them we read that 'God maketh His angels spirits (winds) and His ministers a flame of fire'; and again, 'The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels.' At the divine behest, they get ready to serve in whatever the exigency of the saint, or the occasion under the throne of God, may require. They formed a travelling chariot to convey Elijah to heaven, and to carry Lazarus to Abraham's bosom. They now form chariots of war, when Elisha is beleaguered by the hostile bands of Syria. Either singly or in company they visit the elect on earth, and either alone or in concert celebrate the joy of heaven in the audience of the earth.

*Certainly not Naaman as some have surmised. Yet the knowledge that Elisha had been the instrument of healing the Syrian captain moved some unknown servant of Ben-hadad to suggest that Elisha was responsible for the revelation of the King's plans.

They have drawn the sword to smite a guilty city, or with the strong hand of love dragged the too reluctant one forth from the doomed city. They are either as winds or as fire. They are messengers of mercy, and executors of judgment, as 'the Lord' who 'is among them' may command. They attended on Mount Sinai when the law was published, and they hovered over the fields of Bethlehem when Jesus was born. And here, in their order and strength, they are as a wall of fire, a wall of salvation, round about the prophet.

"Very blessed all this is. And still more blessed to know, that ere long, the hidden glories, which are now only known to such faith as Elisha's, will become the manifested things; and the threatenings of the enemy, the noise and the din and the clang of arms, which are the present apparent things, full of fears and sorrows for the heart, shall have rolled by, like the past thunder-storm, but to leave the sunshine the brighter."*

Elisha then prayed that the besieging host should be smitten with blindness. The prayer was at once answered. He led on the Syrian forces into Samaria. But was it not deception when the man of God said to the blinded enemies, "I will bring you to the man whom ye seek," leading them into Samaria? It was not. Samaria was the home of the prophet and he was then on his way there. His object was to demonstrate to the Syrians, as well as to the King of Israel, that Jehovah is the God and all-sufficient helper of His people. What mercy he then showed to his captives. Jehoram would have smitten them, but Elisha fed them and had them sent away in peace. In this he is a type of Him who taught, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you" (Matt. v:43–44).

Some time after Ben-hadad besieged Samaria and a great

*Meditations on Elisha.

famine followed, and there was such a distress that women ate their own offspring. It was but a fulfilment of the threatened judgments upon an apostate people (Levit. xxvi:29; Deut. xxviii:53). The same horror occured during the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (Lam. iv:10) and also, according to Josephus, during the siege by Titus 70 A.D. The wicked nature of the King asserted itself in blaming Elisha for the misfortune which had fallen upon his kingdom. He seeks to slay the man of God. After all the mighty miracles God had wrought by the hands of Elisha, the representative of Israel, wants to kill the prophet. This also foreshadows our Lord, when they sought to kill Him after His gracious ministry. But Elisha knew the murderous purpose of the King ere the messengers came. He called the King by the right name "this son of a murderer," for such Ahab was. And when the King appeared in person he said, "Behold this evil is of the Lord, what should I wait for the Lord any longer." He realizes the impending judgment on account of Israel's sin.

6. Elisha's Prediction and its Fulfilment

CHAPTER VII.

1. Elisha's Prediction. 1.
2. The Unbelieving Lord. 2.
3. The Four Lepers and their Discovery. 3–8.
4. The Day of Good Tidings. 9–15.
5. The Prediction Fulfilled. 16–18.
6. The Death of the Unbelieving Lord. 19–20.

When the worst had come, Samaria starving to death, the King in despondency, Elisha's life threatened, then the mercy and kindness of God is revealed once more. The prophet announces the good news of salvation and deliverance. All is typical of the Gospel of Grace. The unbelieving lord who rejected the good news and refused to believe it represents those who reject the Gospel. All in this chapter is intensely interesting and suggestive.

The great victory was accomplished by the Lord alone. His chariots had frightened the Syrian camp and put them

to flight. The bread and the water, the silver and gold and raiment, all was His provision for a starving, dying people, and the four lepers in despair, facing certain death, were the first to discover God's victory for them and the people. Their great need led them to find the needed salvation. Well may all this be applied to our Lord's work for us and to the provision of the Gospel. He alone worked out the great salvation and provided all, that sinners dying and lost (represented by the lepers) may come to eat and drink, without money and without price. It was a day of good tidings. Such is the still lasting day of salvation, the day of grace. The lepers who had their fill first and had tasted God's great salvation, could not hold their peace. Through them the whole city hears of the provision made. And the people went out to see how wonderfully the prediction of Elisha had been accomplished. All enjoyed it. But the unbelieving lord perished, a warning that he that believeth not must die in his sins. The repetition at the close of this chapter of the words of the unbeliever recorded in the beginning of this story, is of solemn meaning. God is true to His Word, the Word which promises life to all who believe and which threatens eternal punishment to all who believe not. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

7. The Famine Predicted. Further Events

CHAPTER VIII.

1. The Famine Predicted. 1–2.
2. The Shunammite's Land Restored. 3–6.
3. Elisha with Ben-hadad and Hazael. 7–15.
4. Jehoram King of Judah. (2 Chronicles xxi:5). 16–19.
5. The Revolt of Edom. (2 Chronicles xxi:8–10). 20–21.
6. The Revolt of Libnah (2 Chronicles xxi:10). 22–23.
7. Death of Jehoram. (2 Chronicles xxi:19–20). 24.
8. Ahaziah and Jehoram. (2 Chronicles xxiii:6). 25–29.

The threatened judgment upon the house of Ahab is now rapidly approaching. Elisha, knowing the secrets of the

Lord, predicts the seven years famine. "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secrets unto His servants the prophets" (Amos iii:7). The Shunammite, that godly woman, is here introduced once more. As her husband is not mentioned she may have been a widow. Elisha warns her of the coming famine, and she heeded the warning and sojourned for seven years in the land of the Philistines. After her return all was restored unto her by the King. The introduction here of Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, has drawn the fire of the critics. "As it is unlikely that the King would converse long with a leper, and as Gehazi is still called 'the servant of the man of God,' the incident may here be narrated out of order."* But not so. It is fully in order. Gehazi was known as the servant of Elisha and is mentioned by his former position so that all doubt about his personality might be removed. That the deposed servant was with the apostate King is of much interest and has its lessons.

"It seems to me that Gehazi stands here in a grievous position. Smitten by the hand of God, because his heart clung to earth, even in the presence of Jehovah's mighty and long-suffering testimony, he is now a parasite in the King's court, relating the wonderful things in which he no longer took part. This poor world grows weary enough of itself to lead it to take some pleasure in hearing anything spoken of that has reality and power. Provided that it does not reach the conscience, they will listen to it for their amusement, taking credit to themselves perhaps for an enlarged and a liberal mind, which is not enslaved by that which can yet recognize philosophically in its place. But that is a sad position, which makes it evident that formerly we were connected with a testimony, whilst now we only relate its marvels at court. Nevertheless God makes use of it; and it does not follow that there was no truth in Gehazi. But to rise in the world, and entertain the world with the mighty works of God, is to fall very deep."†

*Expositors Bible.

†Synopsis of the Bible.

Elisha after this went outside of Israel's land to Damascus. Guided by the Lord, whom he served so faithfully, he paid a visit to the sick King of Syria. By referring to 1 Kings xix:15 we find that the commission to anoint Hazael, King over Syria, had been given to Elijah. There is no record from which we learn that Elijah had done so. And now Elisha meets Hazael, who came to him as the messenger of the sick King Ben-hadad, bringing costly presents. And the King asked the question, "Shall I recover of this disease?" The prophet's answer was brief. The sickness itself was not fatal, he would certainly recover and yet the Lord had shown to him that the King should surely die. This meant while the sickness in itself would not result in Ben-hadad's death, he should nevertheless die by other means.

Then Elisha's countenance fell and the man of God wept. Then Elisha told Hazael he wept on account of the horrible atrocities which he would commit against the children of Israel. The fulfillment of Elisha's prediction is found in chapters x:32, xii:17, xiii:3. Weeping Elisha foreshadows our Lord weeping over Jerusalem when He saw what was to come upon the city He loved so well. And Hazael, with a mock humility, expressed surprise. But the prophet revealed the innermost thoughts of his wicked heart by telling him he would be King over Syria; this was his aim. And so returned to Ben-hadad, bringing a mutilated message and murdered the King immediately after.

The record of the Kings of Judah and Israel is now briefly given. All is fast ripening for the long threatened judgment. After the death of Jehoshaphat, his son Jehoram became sole ruler over Judah. He walked in the evil ways of the Kings of Israel and the record tells the reason, "for the daughter of Ahab was his wife." After him came his son Ahaziah. Again wicked Athaliah, his mother,* is mentioned. His connection with Ahab is made prominent.

*The marginal reading "grand-daughter" is correct. She was Ahab's daughter and Omri's grand-daughter.

He did evil also in the sight of the Lord and made an alliance with the son of Ahab, Joram (or Jehoram), who was still King in Israel. Joram was wounded by the Syrians and Ahaziah, King of Judah, visited him in Jezreel. Alas! the unholy alliance of Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, with the wicked murderer, Ahab, King of Israel (1 Kings xxii) had resulted in the marriage of his son with Athaliah, the wicked daughter of a wicked father. And Jehoram, Jehoshaphat's son, was dragged down by her and she became the ruination of her son Ahaziah. A dreadful harvest!

8. The Anointing of Jehu.

CHAPTER IX:1–10

1. The Commission. 1–3.
2. Jehu Anointed. 4–10.

The hour of judgment for the house of Ahab has come. The instrument for it, mentioned long ago to Elijah (1 Kings xix:16–17), appears now upon the scene. The army of Joram, King of Israel, besieged Ramoth-gilead and Jehu was the captain of the forces. Joram was recovering from his wounds in Jezreel. Then Elisha called one of the sons of the prophets. Handing him a box of oil he sent him to Ramoth-gilead. He was to look out for Jehu, the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi,* and anoint him King over Israel. Then he was not to tarry, but to flee.

The messenger carried out the commission and at the same time states the judgment work into which God had called him. He was to execute judgment on the house of Ahab, to avenge the blood of the prophets and the Lord's servants at the hand of Jezebel. The whole house of Ahab was to perish like Jeroboam (1 Kings xiv:10) and that of Baasha (1 Kings xvi:3). "And the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the portion of Jezreel, and there shall be none to bury her." More than fifteen years had passed since Jehovah through

*Jehu means "Jehovah is He;" Jehoshaphat—"Jehovah judges;" Nimshi—"Jehovah reveals." Significant names!

Elijah had announced the doom of the house of Ahab and the doom of Jezebel. And now the hour of execution had come. God will judge in the end, though He is never in haste to execute His threatened judgments. The day is surely coming when the Lord will judge this world, when especially Jezebel (Rev. ii:20), Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, drunken with the blood of the saints, the Romish apostate "church," will receive her judgment. "And in her was found the blood of the prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain on the earth" (Rev. xvii:5–6, xviii:24).

III. The Period of Declension and Apostasy

Chapters ix: 11–17

1. Jehu, King of Israel; His Deeds.

CHAPTER IX:11–37

1. Jehu is King. 11–13.
2. Jehoram, King of Israel Slain. 14–26.
3. Ahaziah Slain. (2 Chron. xxii:9).
4. Jezebel and Her End. 30–37.

Jehu* revealed the secret anointing as King over Israel, and under the blare of the trumpets the army hails him as King. "Jehu is King!" Oh! for that day when our Lord Jesus will be hailed as King to begin His righteous judgment over the earth.

He begins at once his awful judgment-work. He is just

*The Assyrian monuments bear interesting testimony to a good deal of the history contained in 2 Kings. Our space forbids a fuller mention of this. The name of Jehu has a place in the Obelisk of black marble which Layard discovered at Nimrood. The Assyrian form of his name is "Yahua." Shalmaneser II (860–825 B. C.) erected this Obelisk and inscribed on it the annals of his reign in 190 lines in cuneiform characters. Five rows of bas-relief illustrate the annals. The second row pictures the bearers of the tribute of Jehu to the Assyrian King. The Obelisk is in the British Museum.

an instrument used by a holy and righteous God to execute His vengeance. Of real communion with the Lord he knew nothing. Nothing of the fear of the Lord or exercise of soul towards Him is recorded, nor do we read that he ever worshipped or called upon the name of the Lord. There was zeal and obedience in the execution of the judgments of the Lord.

"But how awful in its character! On what a fearful journey does it send this sword of the Lord! From Ramoth to the vineyard of Naboth, from thence to the going up to Gur, from thence to Jezreel, from thence to the shearing-house, and from thence to Samaria, and all the road marked by blood!—blood, too, appointed in righteousness to be shed! For though the sword that shed it cared not for righteousness, yet in its action the Lord was pleading with the flesh of Ahab and his house—as, by and by, He will have a greater pleading, even with all flesh, and the slain of the Lord shall be many. And what shall be the rapidity and the stretch of the divine judgment then! What will be the journey of the sword of the Lord, or the 'grounded staff' in that day, when 'as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be!' "

The record itself of how Joram and Ahaziah fell under the judgment executed by Jehu needs but little comment. Jehoram sent messengers from Jezreel, which Jehu detained, while he drove on furiously. Then Joram, with his nephew Ahaziah, King of Judah, went to meet Jehu. When they met the arrow of Jehu pierced Joram's heart and his body was cast into the field of Naboth, the Jezreelite, "according to the word of the Lord." Ahaziah fled, but was smitten "at the going up of Gur." He tried to reach Megiddo and there he died.

Then comes Jezebel, the wicked. She died as she had lived, in wickedness and pride. She knew she had to die. The evil tidings had reached Jezreel, where once in younger days she was queen and mistress. She painted her face to make herself look beautiful. Did she attempt to attract

Jehu? Hardly that, for she was an old woman, having a grandson twenty-two years old (2 Kings viii:26). It was a proud defiance—she would meet death like a queen. The miserable, doomed woman, "the dunghill,"* of all vileness, the instigator of crimes, looked out of the window, while Jehu's chariot came thundering on. Then she spoke, "Is it peace—Zimri! murderer of his master?" It was a bold daunt. Zimri had murdered his master, but reigned only seven days (1 Kings xvi:9–19). She reminds him of Zimri's deed and Zimri's fate. Eunuchs threw her out of the window. The blood bespattered the wall and the prancing horses. The chariot of Jehu rushed on over her body. He did not pay any attention to her mangled body. Jehu entered the royal palace to feast and afterwards gave command to bury the cursed woman. But little was left of her. And Jehu said, "This is the word of the Lord, which He spake by His servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel." God's judgments are often slow, but they are sure.

2. Jehu's Judgments. Baal-worship Destroyed. His Death.

CHAPTER X

1. The Judgment Upon the House of Ahab. 1–11.
2. The Relations of Ahaziah Slain. (2 Chron. xxii:8). 12–14.
3. Jehonadab Spared. 15–17.
4. The Baal Worship Destroyed. 18–28.
5. Jehu's Record. 29–31.
6. Israel Cut Short. 32–33.
7. Jehu's Death. 34–36.

And now Jehu, the instrument, chosen for judgment, continued his judgment work without showing mercy. The long threatened national judgment upon Israel had begun.

The hint which Jezebel had given him concerning Zimri and the possibility of a rebellion may have influenced Jehu to put away the descendants of Ahab. There were seventy

*Jezebel means "dunghill."

sons, which, according to Hebrew phraseology, means his grandsons and their offspring. He concocts a clever scheme by which the elders of Samaria and the guardians of the grandsons of Ahab were forced to kill the seventy. This was done probably to head off a rebellion against him. Then, according to the custom of those days, the ghastly evidence of the deed was piled in two heaps at the entering in of the gate. Then he addressed the people, showing that while he had slain his master, they were also guilty in slaying these seventy persons, and finally he added the justification of the deeds. "Know now that there shall fall unto the earth nothing of the Word of the Lord, which the Lord spake concerning the house of Ahab, for the Lord hath done that which He spake by His servant Elijah." So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men, and his kinsfolks, and his priests, until he left him none remaining.

Then forty-two princes and the sons of the brethren of Ahaziah (2 Chron. xxii:8) were slain. They were on the way to Jezreel, which showed their guilty affiliation with the wickedness of Jezebel. They were taken alive and then were slain at the pit of the shearing house, probably a cistern called Beth Eged.

Next he met Jehonadab, the son of Rechab. The Rechabites belonged to the Kenites (1 Chron. ii:55). They are first mentioned in Gen. xv:19. A part of this tribe had followed Israel (Num. x:29–32) and settled in the south of Judah (Judges i:16), where they became attached to the Amalekites (1 Sam. xv:6). Jethro, Moses father-in-law, was a Kenite (Judges i:16) and so was Jael, who slew Sisera (Judges iv:17). See the record of Jonadab and his work for the tribe in Jeremiah xxxv:1–16. Jehu recognized him as a friend and took him into his chariot. He may have been acquainted with Elijah; and the great work he did, as made known by Jeremiah, in separating them unto the Lord may have been brought about by the threatened judgment by Elijah and its execution through Jehu, of which Jonadab knew and part of which he witnessed.

Then in great subtilty Jehu destroyed the worshippers of Baal who appeared at his summons in their festive vestments. Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel. But the summary of Jehu's reign gives a mournful picture. Like Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, Jehu did not depart from the golden calves at Beth-el and at Dan. Nor did he take heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart. He is a sad illustration of a man who may be used of God and yet is disobedient in his own life; executing God's plans, yet knowing nothing of real communion. But the Lord did not forget even this imperfect service (verse 30).

3. Athaliah and Jehoiada's Revival.

CHAPTER XI

1. Athaliah's Wicked Reign. 1–3. (2 Chron. xxii:10–12).
2. Joash (Jehoash) proclaimed King. 4–12. (2 Chron. xxiii:1–11).
3. The Death of Athaliah. 13–16. (2 Chron. xxiii:12–15).
4. Jehoida's Revival. 17–21. (2 Chron. xxiii:16–21).

Athaliah, the wicked daughter of a wicked pair (Ahab and Jezebel), the widow of Joram, King of Judah, Jehoshaphat's son and the mother of Ahaziah, who had been slain by Jehu, destroyed the seed royal. She did so because she wanted the authority herself. It was an awful deed, inspired by him who is the murderer from the beginning. And Satan aimed through her at something of which his instrument was ignorant. It was one of the many attempts* Satan made to exterminate the male offspring to make the coming One, the promised Saviour, the seed of the woman, impossible. Had he succeeded through Athaliah in the destruction of the royal seed of David, the promise made to David would have become impossible. Notice the first little word in the second verse, "But"—. Satan's attempt failed. The watchful eye of Jehovah and His power frustrated it all. A wicked woman killed her own children

*In the Concordance, which, the Lord willing, we hope to publish in connection with the Annotated Bible, we shall give summaries of all these interesting matters as well as summaries of doctrines, etc., showing thereby the marvellous harmony of holy Scriptures.

and a godly woman was used to keep one of the royal seed alive. Jehosheba ("the Lord's oath" is the meaning of her name), through whom the covenant-oath was sustained, was the wife of Jehoiada (meaning "the Lord knows"), the high-priest (2 Chron. xxii:11); he was brother-in-law to Ahaziah (2 Chron. xxii:11) and Jehosheba was probably a half sister of Ahaziah. She took the young child from among the King's sons and hid him first in the bed-chamber and then in the house of the Lord till the seventh year. Well may we see here a most beautiful type of our Lord Jesus Christ. Like Joash, He was doomed to death, yea, He died. But He was raised from the dead and is now hidden in the house of God above, the heavens having received him. Joash, the heir of the throne of David, was hidden till the seventh year even as the true heir to the throne of David is now hidden in the presence of God till the six years (six the number of man's day, the present age) are passed. And when the seventh year comes—the beginning of the coming age, He will be brought forth as Joash was brought from his hiding place and be crowned king. A remnant selected by Jehoiada saw the King first. It is a great scene this chapter describes. The company brought together, armed with King David's shields and spears, the King's son brought into the midst, Jehoiada putting the crown upon his head, anointing him with oil, they clapped with their hands and shouted "God save the King." Greater will be the scene when He will be crowned King of Kings, whose right it is to reign. Athaliah, the usurper, appears on the scene, attracted by the noise. She is face to face with the crowned King and receives now her well-deserved punishment outside of the house of the Lord. A great revival followed. A covenant was made by Jehoiada between the Lord and the King and the people "that they should be the Lord's people." Baal's altars and images are broken. The King sits upon his throne. All the people of the land rejoiced and there was peace. All these blessed results are faint foreshadowings of what is yet to be when the usurper is cast out, when the true King is

crowned. Then Israel will be in truth the Lord's people, idolatry will cease, the land and the people will rejoice and the city be quiet.

4. Jehoash. The Temple Repaired. The Death of Jehoash.

CHAPTER XII

1. Jehoash's (Joash) Reign. 1–3. (2 Chron. xxiv:2).
2. The Failure of the Priests. 4–8. (2 Chron. xxiv:4–5.)
3. The Temple Repaired. 9–16. (2 Chron. xxiv:8–14).
4. Hazael and Jehoash. 17–18.
5. The Death of Joash. 19–21. (2 Chron. xxiv:25–27).

Great things had the Lord done both in Israel and in Judah. As we have seen there were numerous Divine interpositions in the downward course, but all led to the final judgments upon both. Revivals took place, but they were not lasting and the reactions which followed produced a greater apostasy. This also is the course of the present age, which will end in a greater departure from God and in a corresponding greater judgment than Israel's. "The people had fallen away from the Divine purpose of their national calling, and become untrue to the meaning of their national history. From this point of view the temporary success of these reform movements may be regarded as a Divine protest against the past. But they ultimately failed because all deeper spiritual elements had passed away from rulers and people." "And still deeper lessons come to us. There is not a more common, nor can there be a more fatal mistake in religion or in religious movements than to put confidence in mere negations, or to expect from them lasting results for good. A negation without a corresponding affirmation is of no avail for spiritual purposes. We must speak because we believe; we deny that which is false only because we affirm and cherish the opposite truth. Otherwise we may resist; and enlist unspiritual men, but we shall not work any deliverance in the land."*

*Edersheim.

The reign of Jehoash had begun well. The record tells us that he did which was right in the sight of the Lord as long as Jehoiada was priest. But what happened after the departure of Jehoiada? The answer is indicated in verse 3 and fully given in 2 Chron. xxiv:17–22. The King, who had received such kindness from Jehoiada, ordered the stoning of Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, because he delivered a faithful message to the King against his idolatry.

The leading work of Jehoash's reign was the repairing of the Temple. This had become necessary because the family of Athaliah had broken it up and used the dedicated things in the worship of Baal (2 Chron. xxiv:7). The King took the initiative, but the neglect of the priests made the work practically impossible. Then the work was taken up in earnest by Jehoiada, and voluntary contributions received. A large sum was collected which was exclusively used for the repairing of the temple. When this was completed the balance was used for the purchase of the sacred vessels (see 2 Chron. xxiv:14).

Then Hazael began his wicked work and threatened Jerusalem. Joash bought him off by turning over to him all the hallowed things of the Temple and the treasures of the palace. Not a word is said that Jehoash sought the Lord or prayed. It shows only too clearly that Jehovah, the present help in time of trouble, had been forgotten. The death of the King, murdered in the house of Millo followed soon. In our annotations of Chronicles we shall hear more of his history. Then Amaziah reigned in his stead.

5. Jehoahaz and Jehoash of Israel. Elisha's Death.

CHAPTER XIII

1. The Reign of Jehoahaz and His Death. 1–9.
2. Jehoash King of Israel. 10–13.
3. Elisha and Joash. 14–19.
4. The Death of Elisha. 20–21.
5. Hazael and His Death. 22–25.

Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, reigned after the death of his father (x:35) and here we learn that he also followed in the

abominable worship which Jeroboam had instituted in Bethel and in Dan. The Lord delivered therefore Israel into the hands of Hazael of Syria and into his son's hand. Jehoahaz prayed to the Lord and the Lord, so abundant in mercy, hearkened, for He saw the oppression of Israel, because the King of Syria oppressed them. Verses 5 and 6 form a parenthesis. The seventh verse tells of the havoc which the King of Syria had wrought among Israel. The prayer of Jehoahaz, though heard, was not fully answered at once. The paranthetic verses (5 and 6) must be looked upon as giving a summary of the entire history; God sent a saviour and yet they continued in their sins. Joash, the son of Jehoahaz, was the first one through whom a partial deliverance was wrought (verse 25) and the full deliverance came under the grandson Jeroboam II (xiv:25–27). We have here a good illustration of how the Lord hears prayer and how in His sovereignty and all-wise purposes He may delay the answer for many years. It should be enough for God's people to know that prayer is heard and to leave the answer with Him, who does all things well. And so Jehoahaz saw nothing but oppression (verse 22) though he had turned unto the Lord and had prayed. It was a trial of faith.

After his death his son Jehoash* (also called Joash) reigned. There was no change for the better. Verses 10–13 are another brief summary giving briefly the character of his reign, his death and his successor.

The deathbed scene of Elisha and Joash's visit follows. Over sixty years Elisha had been the prophet of God. The last we heard of this great man of God was when he sent his messenger to anoint Jehu. Many years† had passed and no ministry of Elisha is recorded. He was quite forgotten and neglected. The same was the case with Daniel in Babylon. When apostasy advances, the Lord's true prophets are not wanted; they share the rejection of the

*Distinguish from the King of Judah of the same name.

†Forty-five years.

Lord and His Truth. Joash then visited the dying prophet. From this we may gather that his abode was known and that Joash realized that Elisha's death would be a great loss. He utters the same words which Elisha spoke when Elijah went to heaven. He wept and still his words were the words of unbelief, as if with Elisha's death "the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof," the protection and blessing for Israel would have an end. Then follows the symbolical shooting of the arrows and the smiting of the ground. Half-heartedly the unbelieving King enters into that which Elisha had made so plain. It was Joash's lack of faith, indicated by smiting the ground but thrice, which made the complete victory over the Syrians impossible. Only "three times did Joash beat him (Hazael's son Ben-hadad) and recovered the cities of Israel." (verse 25). If he had faith it would have been five and six times.

Elisha had died. A corpse about to be buried was hastily cast into the sepulchre of Elisha, where his bones rested. "And when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived and stood up on his feet." This final miracle bears a great and blessed testimony. Here an application must be made concerning Him who is foreshadowed in Elisha's ministry of grace. It is by faith in Him who died that sinners receive life and are raised up from the dead. To touch Him in faith means to live. And Israel, moreover, is typically represented by the dead man and through Him who died for that nation, Israel is yet to live.

6. Kings of Israel and Judah

CHAPTER XIV-XV

1. Amaziah's Reign Over Judah. 1–7. (2 Chron. xxv).
2. The Conflict between Israel and Judah. 8–11. (2 Chron. xxv: 17–24.)
3. Judah's Defeat and Jerusalem Taken. 12–14.
4. Jehoash and His Successor. 15–16.
5. Death of Amaziah. 17–20. (2 Chron. xxv:26–28).
6. Azariah King of Judah. 21–22.
7. Jeroboam II. 23–29.

Amaziah, a son of Joash, began his reign over Judah. His mother was Jehoaddan (Lord is pleased) of Jerusalem. He did right in the sight of the Lord and yet he followed the errors of his father. His first deed was to deal in judgment with the two servants who had murdered his father in Milo, both of whom were sons of Gentile women (2 Kings xii:19–21; 2 Chron. xxiv:26). He feared, however, the Word of God. The additional record which is found in Chronicles we shall not follow here, but do so in the annotations of that book. He raised a large army and hired besides 100,000 Israelitish mercenaries at a tremendous cost. He gained a victory over Edom. All the cruelties practised then we shall find recorded in Chronicles. He became lifted up by his victories and then challenged Jehoash, the King of Israel. That King answered by a parable. The thistle in Lebanon is Amaziah; the cedar is Jehoash, King of Israel. The wild beast that was in Lebanon overcoming the thistle (Amaziah) is Jehoash's army. And the King of Israel gave him a solemn warning to desist. But proud Amaziah paid no attention to Jehoash's words. God was behind it all. "It came of God, that He might deliver them into the hand of their enemies, because they sought after the gods of Edom" (2 Chron. xxv:20). A complete defeat of Amaziah followed and Jerusalem was taken. And Jehoash "took all the gold and the silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house of God with Obed-Edom, and the treasures of the King's house, the hostages also and returned unto Samaria." After this humiliating defeat there

followed a revolution in Jerusalem and the unhappy King fled to Lachish, where he was slain. His body was brought back to Jerusalem for burial.

The brief record of the reign of Jeroboam II concludes this chapter. The Prophet Jonah, the son of Amittai is here mentioned. This same Jonah made later the experience which the book of Jonah relates and to which our Lord refers as a historic fact. Hosea and Amos* also prophesied at that time in Israel.

CHAPTER XV

1. Reign and Death of Azariah (Uzziah). 1–2. (2 Chron. xxvi).
2. Reign and Death of Zachariah. 8–12.
3. Reign and Death of Shallum. 13–15.
4. Menahem King of Israel. 16–18.
5. Pul of Assyria and Menahem. 19–20. (1 Chron. v:26).
6. Death of Menahem. 21–22.
7. Pekahiah and His Death. 23–26.
8. Pekah and His Death. Hoshea. 27–31.
9. Jotham King of Judah. 32–38. (2 Chron. xxvii).

Eight kings are mentioned in this chapter. Of five it is said they did evil in the sight of the Lord. One was a leper; four were murdered; one committed unspeakable cruelties.

Azariah is first mentioned. In 2 Chronicles his name is Uzziah; but he is also called by this name in the present chapter (verses 13, 30, 32 and 34). Different explanations of the use of this double name have been given. We insert here the one advanced by Edersheim as the most satisfactory.

"The usual explanation either of a clerical error through the confusion of similar letters, or that he bore two names seem equally unsatisfactory. Nor is the meaning of the two names precisely the same—Azariah being 'Jehovah helps'; Uzziah, 'My strength is Jehovah.' May it not be that Azariah was his real name, and that when after his

*The books of Hosea and Amos, especially the latter, shed much light upon the history of the kingdom of Israel under Jeroboam and his son. This will be pointed out in annotations of both books.

daring intrusion into the sanctuary (2 Chron. xxvi:16-20), he was smitten with lifelong leprosy, his name was significantly altered into the cognate Uzziah—'My strength is Jehovah'—in order to mark that the 'help' which he had received had been dependent on his relation to the Lord. This would accord with the persistent use of the latter name in 2 Chronicles—considering the view-point of the writer—and with its occurrence in the prophetic writings (Hosea i:1; Amos i:1; Isa. i:1, vi:1, vii:1). And the explanation just suggested seems confirmed by the circumstance that although this King is always called Uzziah in 2 Chronicles, yet the Hebrew word for 'help', which forms the first part of the name Azariah, recurs with marked emphasis in the account of the Divine help accorded in his expeditions (2 Chron. xxvi:7, 13, 15)."

As his intrusion into the priestly office and his punishment for it is found in full in the Second Book of Chronicles, we shall follow it there.

Then follows the brief record of Zachariah ("The Lord remembers"), King of Israel. He became King of Israel in the thirty-eighth year of Uzziah, King of Judah. He was the son of Jeroboam II and the fourth and last ruler of the dynasty of Jehu. Thus was literally fulfilled the Word of the Lord (2 Kings x:30). His reign lasted only six months. Shallum assassinated him in public. The murderer occupied the throne only one month. Shallum means "Requital." As he did to Zachariah so Menahem did to him. All was now lawlessness in apostate Israel. Departure from God and the true worship came first and that opened the way for moral corruption and lawlessness. The same is true of this present Christian age. It also ends in apostasy, moral corruption and lawlessness. Hosea testified faithfully to these conditions. "And the revolters are profound to make slaughter, though I have been a rebuker of them all"—"They will not frame their doings to turn unto their God, for the spirit of whoredoms is in the midst of them and they have not known the Lord. And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face; therefore shall

Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquity, Judah also shall fall with them" (Hosea v:2–4).

Josephus here informs us that Menahem was the military leader of Zachariah, the murdered King. When Tiphsah refused his authority he executed a terrible, barbaric punishment. "All the women therein that were with child he ripped up." And God in His eternal justice permitted the same punishment to fall upon Samaria (Hosea xiii:16; Amos i:13).

And now for the first time the Assyrian is mentioned, the power used by God to execute judgment upon the Kingdom of Israel. The meaning of the Assyrian in prophecy we shall point out later. Pul, King of Assyria, came against the land. In verse 29 Tiglath-pileser is mentioned as King of Assyria. Are these two different Kings or are they the same person under different names? The identity of Pul with Tiglath-pileser II has been proved, after the most painstaking research, beyond the possibility of a doubt. The Assyrian monuments bear witness to this fact.* In the annals of Tiglath-pileser the record is found that he received tribute from "*Minikhimmi Samirina*"—this is Menahem the Samaritan. Pul was evidently one name of the Assyrian ruler and later he assumed the title of Tiglath-pileser II. This does not clash at all with the statement in 1 Chron. v:26. Through paying an immense amount of tribute (almost two million dollars) the Assyrian was kept back. Menahem's son, Pekahiah, after this father's death, ruled two years in Israel. He also was assassinated. Pekah headed the conspiracy and killed him. Under his reign, doing evil in the sight of the Lord, Tiglath-pileser came again and devastated a part of the land "and carried them captive to Assyria." This marks the beginning of the end. This invasion took place after his wicked attack upon Jerusalem with Rezin of Damascus during the reign of Ahaz,

*"Assyrian Echoes of the Word" by Laurie and "Fresh Light from the Ancient Monuments" by Prof. Sayce, are helpful books on these and other questions.

King of Judah. He tried to overthrow the house of David (2 Kings xvi:1–8; 2 Chron. xxviii; Isa. vii:4–8). Wicked Pekah, who had killed so many Jews (2 Chron. xxviii:6) was murdered by Hoshea, who reigned in his stead. His death had been predicted by Isaiah (chapter vii:16).

The full record of Jotham, King of Israel, is given in the Book of Chronicles. It was in those days that the Lord began to send against Judah Rezin, the King of Syria, and Pekah, the son of Remaliah. Judah, like Israel, was degenerating fast and the Lord chastised them by judgments.

7. King Ahaz and Assyria

CHAPTER XVI

1. King Ahaz and His Reign. 1–4. (2 Chron. xxviii).
2. The Invasion by the Two Kings. 5–6.
3. Ahaz Appeals to Assyria. 7–8.
4. Ahaz in Damascus and the Idolatrous Altar. 9–18.
5. Death of Ahaz. 19–20. (2 Chron. xxviii:26–27).

Righteous Jotham had for his successor a wicked son. Ahaz "walked in the way of the Kings of Israel, yea, and made his son pass through the fire* according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel." For additional wickedness he committed see 2 Chron. xxviii:2, 21–25. He burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom and burnt his children in the fire.

"But this was to revive the old Canaanitish and Phoenician worship, with all its abominations and all its defilements. The valley of Gihon, which bounds Jerusalem on the west, descends at its southern extremity into that of Hinnom, which in turn joins at the ancient royal gardens the valley of Kidron, that runs along the eastern declivity of the Holy City. There, at the junction of the valleys of

*It means the horrible rite of child-sacrifice. Ahaz was the first among the kings who did this. As the apostasy increased this awful ceremony became more frequent. (2 Kings xvii:17; xxi:6; xxiii:10; Mic. vi:7; Jerem. vii:31; xix:5).

Hinnom and Kidron, in these gardens, was Topheth—'the spitting out,' or place of abomination—where an Ahaz, a Manasseh, and an Amon, sacrificed their sons and daughters to Baal-Moloch, and burnt incense to foul idols. Truly was Hinnom 'moaning,' and rightly was its name Gehinnom (valley of Hinnom—Gehenna), adopted as that for the place of final suffering. And it is one of those strange coincidences that the hill which rises on the south side of this spot was that 'potter's field,' the 'field of blood,' which Judas bought with the wages of his betrayal, and where with his own hands he executed judgment on himself. History is full of such coincidences, as men call them; nor can we forget in this connection that it was on the boundary-line between the reigns of Jotham and Ahaz that Rome was founded (in 752 B.C.), which was destined to execute final judgment on apostate Israel."*

Isaiah, Micah, Hosea and Oded then exercised their prophetic offices. When Rezin, King of Syria, and Pekah, the son of Remaliah, King of Israel, came against Jerusalem and besieged Ahaz, he appealed to Tiglath-pileser to save him out of their hands, instead of crying to Jehovah for the deliverance he had promised to His people. The King also took the silver and gold from the Lord's house and presented it to Tiglath-pileser. Then after Ahaz had declared himself the vassal of Assyria ("I am thy servant"), Tiglath-pileser conquered Damascus. The inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser mention this fact. We refer again to Isaiah vii. The alliance with the Assyrian was opposed by Isaiah. He told Ahaz "at the end of the conduit of the upper pool" to ask a sign of any kind of the Lord God, to allay the fears of the King and give an evidence that the Lord would preserve the house of David. And furthermore Isaiah had taken with him his son Shear-jashub, which means "the remnant shall return," prophetic also of the preservation of a remnant. When wicked Ahaz refused the prophet uttered that great sign which was to take place over seven

*Edersheim.

hundred years after, that the virgin should conceive and bring forth a son, even Immanuel. The house of David might be punished and chastised, but there could be no full end of the royal family, for the promised One had to come from David and receive in due time the promised Kingdom. And Isaiah also predicted that the Assyrian, in whom Ahaz had put his trust, should come upon them (Isa. vii:17). What Pekah did to Judah and Oded's testimony against Pekah we shall learn from the Chronicles.

The erection of a new altar in the Temple by Ahaz according to the pattern of the idol-altar, opened the door wide for the unlawful worship in the Temple of God. He found a willing helper in Urijah ("the Lord is light"), who conducted the worship "according to all that King Ahaz commanded." And greater profanation followed. He even shut up the doors of the house of the Lord (2 Chron. xxviii: 24), which probably meant a complete cessation of the services in the Holy Place. The gods of Damascus were worshipped by him in connection with this altar (2 Chron. xxviii:23). And in Christendom an even greater profanation of worship has come to pass. True Christian worship is in Spirit and in Truth. Roman Catholicism has erected altars patterned more or less after the ancient Babylonish worship.

7. Assyria Conquers Israel. The Captivity.

CHAPTER XVII

1. Hoshea, Israel's last King. 1–2.
2. Shalmaneser Imprisons Hoshea. 3–4
3. Israel Carried into Captivity. 5–6.
4. Retrospect and Israel's Sins. 7–23.
5. The Colonization of Samaria. 24–41.

Israel's last King was Hoshea. His name means "deliverance." It indicates what might have been had he and the people repented of their sins. The record of his character is brief. "And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, but not as the Kings of Israel before him."

This does not mean that he improved. The golden calves had been taken away by the Assyrian from Bethel and Dan, so that he could no longer sin like Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, and the other Kings of Israel. Hosea had predicted this (Hosea x:5–8).

Shalmaneser, King of Assyria, then came against him, and Hoshea became his servant. The Biblical account is meagre, but the Assyrian inscriptions have a great deal to say about this period. Shalmaneser's name is given in these inscriptions as "*Salmanu-ussir*" and Hoshea's as "*A-usi.*" From these inscriptions we learn that after the siege of Samaria had lasted two years Shalmaneser was succeeded by Sargon, who took Samaria in the first year of his reign. While Sargon is not mentioned in the record here it is significant that the capture of Samaria is not attributed to Shalmaneser. Both passages, 2 Kings xvii:6 and xviii: 10–11, speak only of the King of Assyria. These inscriptions declare that Sargon captured Samaria, led away 27,290 of its inhabitants and appointed a governor over Samaria. There is also a record of the deportation of Israel and the colonization of the land. What would these interesting ancient inscriptions mean if it were not for the Bible. Again we say they are proven true because the Word of God confirms them.

Hoshea had, after he had become the vassal of the King of Assyria, made a conspiracy against the King by sending messengers to So*, King of Egypt, and then he refused to pay the tribute. He was imprisoned and we hear nothing whatever of his fate.† Samaria completely in the hands of the King of Assyria the people were carried away captives into Assyria. The places are given, but beyond this little is known. Nor do we know anything about their subsequent history. They did not return from the cap-

*The proper reading is given as Seve or Sava. By the Greeks he is called "Saba Kon" on the monuments 'Shabaka," in cuneiform inscriptions "Shabi-i."

†Hosea x:7 tells of his death.

tivity. Various attempts have been made to locate them. The American Indians, the Afghans, Armenians, Nestorians and others have been mentioned as the descendants of the ten tribes, but no substantial evidence can be given to verify this supposition. The so-called "Anglo-Israel theory" is so full of unreasonable speculations and inventions that it does not deserve any consideration. God knows where they are located, and in His own time He will surely gather them and together with the remnant of the house of Judah bring them back to their land. At that time the many unfulfilled promises made to Israel and to Judah will all be literally fulfilled.

There is next given a solemn retrospect of the history of the house of Israel. Judah is also mentioned. The record shows the awful apostasy and the great patience of Jehovah in delaying the threatened judgment.

The account of the colonization of Samaria by the King of Assyria is interesting. It gives the history of the Samaritans, which emanated from this mixture of races and religions and which were responsible for much trouble after the return of the Jewish remnant from the exile. The priest who was returned from Assyria to teach religious rites to the colonists settled in Bethel, where Jeroboam had instituted the idolatrous worship, which had dragged Israel down, produced a new religion, partly Israelitish and partly heathenish, like the mixed multitude which dwelt in the land.

Thus ended the Kingdom of Israel. Out of the nineteen Kings which reigned seven were murdered, one died from wounds received on the battlefield, one died from a fall out of the window, one was struck down by the judgment of God and one committed suicide.

IV. The Reign of Hezekiah, Manasseh and Amon.

Chapters xviii–xxi

1. Hezekiah and Sennacherib's Invasion

CHAPTER XVIII

1. Hezekiah, King of Judah. 1–3. (2 Chron. xxix-xxxii).
2. The Revival. 4–7.
3. Victory over the Philistines. 8.
4. Israel's Captivity. 9–12.
5. Sennacherib's Invasion. 13–16.
6. Sennacherib's Messengers and Message. 17–25. (2 Chron. xxii:9–19.)
7. The Request of Hilkiah, Shebna and Joah. 26.
8. Rabshakeh's Insulting Answer. 27–37.

Hezekiah ("strength of Jehovah") was the pious son of a very wicked father. It is refreshing to read now after the long list of Kings who did evil in God's sight that Hezekiah "did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father David did." According to the Book of Chronicles, the first thing he did was to open the doors of the house of the Lord (which Ahaz his father had closed) and repair them (2 Chron. xxix:3). This was a true beginning. We shall find in Chronicles the details of the great revival and the restoration of the Temple-worship, the keeping of the Passover as well as the other reforms which took place under his reign. All these will be considered in the annotations on Second Chronicles. He destroyed also all forms of idolatry. Especially mentioned is the brazen serpent which Moses had made. This interesting object had been preserved since the days when Moses had lifted it up in the wilderness, the wonderful type of Him who knew no sin and who was made sin for us on the cross. The children of Israel in their apostasy had made the brazen serpent an object of worship. He broke it in pieces and called it Nehushtan, which means "brazen."

Thus negatively and positively a great reformation was accomplished. The secret of it all we find tersely stated in one sentence. "He trusted in the Lord God of Israel." Because he trusted Jehovah, Jehovah was with him. "And the Lord was with him, and he prospered whithersoever he went forth." This is the way of all true recovery and the way to blessing.

The evil alliance with the King of Assyria, which his father had made, the God-fearing King refused to own. "He rebelled against the King of Assyria and served him not." Immediately after he smote the ancient enemy of God's people, the Philistine.* In annotations of Judges we learned the typical significance of the Philistines. They represent ritualistic Christendom. After Hezekiah's restoration of the true worship of Jehovah and after the breaking down of all false altars and idol worship, a complete victory over the Philistines has a special meaning. Ritualism, the deadly foe of true worship, can only be overcome by a return to that true worship and trust in the Lord. Protestantism attempted this, but it has failed.

The rebellion of Hezekiah against Assyria may have been under the reign of Shalmaneser. Then followed Sargon, who was succeeded by his son Sennacherib. In all probability Sennacherib was co-regent with his father Sargon. The Assyrian inscriptions concerning Sennacherib covering this period are very interesting though not always correct and often mixed and confusing. In the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, Sennacherib came against all the fenced cities of Judah and they fell before him. Isaiah x gives us additional information on this invasion. True Hezekiah's faith was severely tested. Sennacherib had not yet come near to Jerusalem and Hezekiah sent to him at Lachish saying "I have offended; return from me; that which thou puttest on me will I bear." It was not according to faith, but the

*The fate of Samaria, the kingdom of Israel is once more mentioned in verses 9–12 obviously because chronologically it followed Hezekiah's victory over the Philistines.

godly King had acted in fear and unbelief. No mention is made by Isaiah of this occurrence, nor do we find a record of it in the Chronicles. The tribute was very heavy, amounting to over one million and a half dollars. Hezekiah had to use the silver and the gold of the Temple and the palace to meet this obligation.

Then Sennacherib decided to attack Jerusalem. Here we have three accounts of what took place: 2 Kings xviii–xix; 2 Chron. xxxii and Isaiah xxxvi–xxxvii. These Scriptures should be carefully read and compared. From 2 Chron. xxxii:1–8 we learn the wise preparations Hezekiah made in anticipation of the coming attack. The water supply for the invading army was cut off; he made strong fortifications; he reorganized the army. But the best of all are the words he addressed to the people. "Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor discouraged for the King of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him; for there be more with us than with him. With him is an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles." These were noble words. No wonder the people leaned upon them in that hour of trial. We hear in them an echo of Isaiah's faithful ministry. The head of the expedition and negotiations for the surrender of Jerusalem were entrusted to the "Tartan," the commander-in-chief of the army: "Rabsaris," which has been explained to mean "chief of the eunuchs" and Rabshakeh, the Assyrian title of "chief captain." The message which Rabsha-keh brought was delivered from the same spot where Isaiah stood when he gave his message to Ahaz (Isa. vii:3). The words of the emissary of Sennacherib were coarse; they reveal the blindness of a heathen, who thought of Jehovah having been offended by Hezekiah's great reformation (verse 22). Politically and religiously it was misrepresentation. He ended with a lie "the Lord said to me, Go up against this land and destroy it."

When the representatives of Hezekiah requested for the sake of the populace not to speak in Hebrew, but in Aramean, which the common people did not understand, Rabshakeh

became very abusive and shouted a vulgar appeal to the people. It needs no further commentations. The people were obedient to the King. They answered not a word. And the King's representatives return to the King with clothes rent.

2. Hezekiah and Isaiah. The Deliverance.

CHAPTER XIX

1. Hezekiah's Message to Isaiah. 1–5.
2. Isaiah's Answer. 6–7.
3. Sennacherib's Message to Hezekiah. 8–13. (2 Chron. xxxii:17).
4. Hezekiah's Prayer. 14–19. (2 Chron. xxxii:20).
5. Jehovah's Answer through Isaiah. 20–34.
6. The Deliverance. 35. (2 Chron. xxxii:21–22).
7. Sennacherib's Death. 30–37.

And Hezekiah also rent his clothes. In deep humiliation and sorrow the pious man went to the house of the Lord and sent messengers to Isaiah. This is most blessed. He did not call a counsel of his advisers, a meeting of the captains to talk the matter over; nor did he send first to the prophet. Faith knows a better way than that. He went straight into the presence of the Lord and the sending to Isaiah was secondary. Many of our failures as His people are due to the fact that we do not go to the Lord first.

And equally beautiful is his message to God's prophet. He mentions not himself in the danger of Jerusalem. It is the honor of Jehovah which is at stake; the honor of the living God is at stake. The Assyrian had defied the God of Israel. Yea, Hezekiah's comfort was that Jehovah had heard it all and knew it all. What lessons and what comforts are here for us also! Then he requests prayer.

The divine answer through Isaiah was brief. Be not afraid! The blessed assurance for faith first—Fear not! The promise of deliverance is the second thing in Isaiah's answer.

Another message in the form of a letter is sent by Sennacherib to the King. Again Hezekiah goes with it straight

to the Lord. He read it and went up into the house of the Lord and spread it before the Lord. What blessing there would be in the lives of all God's people; what wonderful evidences of His power and His love we might have if all things which happened unto us were at once taken into the presence of God and spread before Him!

And the beautiful answer to Hezekiah's prayer sent through the prophet! The Lord had heard, He had seen. All what had taken place He knew and any word which had been spoken. The message ends with the assuring word, "I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake."

That night the judgment stroke fell. The whole Assyrian army of 185,000 men was smitten by the angel of the Lord. Prophetically it stands for the end of the Assyrian who will enter Israel's land during the great tribulation and who will perish like Sennacherib's army.

Sennacherib dwelt after that in Nineveh. There he was murdered by his own sons. An Assyrian cylinder in the British Museum contains a record of this deed.

3. Hezekiah's Illness, Recovery, Failure and Death.

CHAPTER XX

1. Hezekiah's Illness and Recovery. 1–11. (2 Chron. xxxii:24).
2. Hezekiah's Failure. 12–19. (2 Chron. xxxii:25–31).
3. The Death of Hezekiah. 20–21. (2 Chron. xxxii:32–33).

Hezekiah's sickness must have occurred about the second invasion of the Assyrian. Then the prophet Isaiah delivered to him the message of approaching death. "Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live." The message made a deep impression on the sick King. He turned his face to the wall; he prayed and wept sore. Though he was a pious man he was greatly agitated and deeply moved when he heard the announcement of his coming departure. The meagre knowledge God's saints had in Old Testament times on the things beyond the grave, as well as the conception that an untimely death denoted divine disfavor produced no doubt much of

this grief. How differently saints in New Testaments can face death! Life and immortality is now brought to light by the Gospel, and we know that absent from the body means to be present with the Lord, and to depart and be with Christ is "far better."

Hezekiah's prayer was at once heard and answered. It is one of the most striking answers to prayer. Isaiah had not gone very far, he had just reached the middle of the court, when he was commanded to turn back and bring to Hezekiah the answer. Seven things are contained in this new message to the weeping King. "I have heard thy prayer"; "I have seen thy tears"; "I will heal thee"; "Thou shalt go up to the house of the Lord" "I will add unto thy days fifteen years"; "I will deliver thee"; "I will defend the city." And Isaiah was also commanded to use means. "Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil and he recovered." If this simple remedy had been neglected, if there had been disobedience, the recovery would not have taken place. The third day is mentioned on which he should go up to the house of the Lord. For Israel there is also in store the third day, when they will be raised up nationally and worship the Lord (Hosea vi:2). Then there was the sign of the shadow turning backward ten degrees on the dial of Ahaz.* Hezekiah's experience is a great encouragement for God's people to pray.

*"It is interesting to learn that Ahaz had—probably on his visit to Damascus (2 Kings xvi:10)—seen and brought to Jerusalem some of the scientific appliances of the great empire of the East. It is impossible to determine whether this mode of measuring the progress of time (not strictly hours) was by a sun-dial, the invention of which Herodotus ascribed to the Babylonians. According to Ideler it was a *gnomon*, or index, surrounded by concentric circles, by which the time of the day was marked by the lengthening shadow. But the term 'steps' seems rather to indicate an obelisk surrounded by steps, the shadow on which marked the hours, so that the shadow falling in the morning westwards first on the lowest step, gradually ascended to the plane on the top, and after midday again descended the steps eastwards. As the text seems to imply that there were twenty such "steps," they must have marked the quarters of an hour, and in that case the event has happened about half-past two o'clock p. m."—*Bible History.*

And the promise the Lord had given, "I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the King of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake," was wonderfully fulfilled in the complete destruction of Sennacherib's army. The last we hear of this great King is the failure when he was lifted up with pride and did not give the glory to God. Merodach-baladan,* King of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah when he heard of his sickness and his miraculous recovery. This is the first time we hear of a King of Babylon. The ambassadors came possibly to form with Hezekiah a league against Assyria. Hezekiah was favorably impressed, "he hearkened unto them," and then he made a display of all his possession. He had hearkened unto them and pleased with the attention shown to him and the presents the King of Babylon had sent to him, he became lifted up in his heart, he boasted of his wealth and his possessions. Then Isaiah had another message for him. The Babylonian captivity is announced; remarkable in itself. How verses 17 and 18 were fulfilled is well known.

4. Manasseh and Amon.

CHAPTER XXI

1. Manasseh's reign of Wickedness. 1–9. (2 Chron. xxxiii:2–9).
2. The Word of the Lord Against It. 10–15.
3. Manasseh's End. 16–18. (2 Chron. xxxiii:18–20).
4. Reign and Death of Amon. 19–26. (2 Chron. xxxiii:20–25).

Hezekiah had a wicked father and his son Manasseh did not follow the example of his father, but became even more wicked than Ahaz, his grandfather. Manasseh means "forgetting." No doubt Hezekiah named him thus because the Lord had delivered him and thus made him forget his troubles and trials. He was born three years after Hezekiah's recovery from sickness. And now Manasseh forgot all the goodness and mercy of the Lord and plunged headlong into the worst apostasy. All the vile practices of the

*Berodach is the error of some scribe. See Isaiah xxxix:1.

Canaanites and the Sodomites were revived by him. The Moloch-worship flourished, sorcery and the practice of demonism as well. The corruption was more vile than the corruption of Samaria. It was even worse than the corruption of the Canaanites. "Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel." And still more evil is recorded of this King. "Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to the another" (verse 16). Josephus declares that he killed all the righteous in Jerusalem and it is not unlikely that the tradition of aged Isaiah's violent death under Manasseh's reign is correct. Then the Lord sent to him his judgment message, announcing the coming doom of Jerusalem. Of his conversion and subsequent reign nothing is said in Kings. We find the record of these interesting events in Chronicles. His conversion was indeed a miracle of grace.

After his death Amon ruled as King and followed all the wickedness of his father Manasseh. Terrible is the record of this lost soul. "And he humbled not himself before the Lord as Manasseh his father had humbled himself; but Amon trespassed more and more" (2 Chron. xxxiii:23). He was murdered by his servants.

V. The Reign of Josiah

Chapters xxii–xxiii:30

1. The Revival.

CHAPTER XXII

1. Josiah begins to Reign. 1–2. (2 Chron. xxxiv:1–2).
2. The Temple Repaired. 3–7. (2 Chron. xxxiv:8–13).
3. The Law Discovered. 8–9. (2 Chron. xxxiv:14–21).
4. The Reading of the Law and its Results. 10–14.
5. The Words of Huldah, the Prophetess. 15–20.

After the violent death of Amon his eight-year-old son Josiah ("sustained by Jehovah") began to reign. Under

him the greatest reformation and revival took place. While he was yet young he began to seek after the God of David his Father. Afterward he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem. The carved images and molten images as well as the altars of Baal were destroyed by him. "And he burnt the bones of the priests upon the altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem" (2 Chron. xxxiv:5). Thus was fulfilled the prophecy uttered more than three hundred years before by the man of God from Judah (1 Kings xiii:2). Perhaps the prophecy had been forgotten, the unbelievers may have ridiculed its fulfillment. But when God's time came He saw to the literal fulfillment of His own Word. It is so today. Rationalists scoff at the Word of God. Others spiritualize the predictions of the Bible and do not believe that they will ever be fulfilled. This is one of the characteristics of the last days of the age (2 Peter iii:3–7).

We must leave it to the reader to study the details of the great reformation-revival which took place under Josiah. In the annotations on Second Chronicles we point out some of its lessons. After the breaking down of the idols and idol-altars the temple was repaired. The law was also found by Hilkiah the high-priest. The Word of the Lord written by Moses in the Pentateuch had most likely been hidden away by Manasseh. It was the accusing voice of God against the wickedness of the King. Strange it is that it is not mentioned in connection with the repentance and conversion of Manasseh. And when the Law was read to the King by Shaphan, the King rent his clothes.

"Here we have a tender conscience bowing under the action of the Word of God. This was one special charm in the character of Josiah. He was, in truth, a man of an humble and a contrite spirit, who trembled at the Word of God. Would that we all knew more of this! It is a most valuable feature of the Christian character. We certainly do need to feel, much more deeply, the weight, authority, and seriousness of Scripture. Josiah had no question whatever in his mind as to the genuineness and authenticity of the words which Shaphan had read in his hearing. We do

not read of his asking, 'How am I to know that this is the Word of God?' No; he trembled at it. He bowed before it. He was smitten down under it. He rent his garments. He did not presume to sit in judgment upon the Word of God, but, as was meet and right, he allowed that word to judge him.

"Thus it should ever be. If man is to judge Scripture, then Scripture is not the Word of God at all. But if Scripture is, in very truth, the Word of God, then it must judge man. And so it is, and so it does. Scripture is the Word of God and it judges man thoroughly. It lays bare the very roots of his nature—it opens up the foundations of his moral being. It holds up before him the only faithful mirror in which he can see himself perfectly reflected. This is the reason why man does not like Scripture—cannot bear it—seeks to set it aside—delights to pick holes in it—dares to sit in judgment upon it. It is not so in reference to other books. Men do not trouble themselves so much to discover and point out flaws and discrepancies in Homer or Herodotus, Aristotle or Shakespeare. No; but Scripture judges them—judges their ways—their lusts. Hence the enmity of the natural mind to that most precious and marvellous book which carries its own credentials to every divinely prepared heart."*

The direct result of reading the Word of God was more than outward grief and repentance. The King gave the command, "Go ye, inquire of the Lord for me, and for the people and for all Judah." Jeremiah and Zephaniah were then upon the scene, but we do not read anything of them in the record. It is Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum ("retribution"), the son of Tikvah (meaning "Hope") the son of Harhas (meaning "extremely poor"). That he had to inquire of a woman, the weaker vessel, must have been humiliating to the King. And Huldah's message is one of judgment. To Josiah personally good is promised. He was not to see the evil. In spite of the great reforma-

*From "Things New and Old."

tion-revival, judgment would fall upon Judah and upon Jerusalem (verses 15–17).

And here is an important lesson for our own times. Reformations and revivals cannot keep back the decreed judgments of God. Often it is thought that great waves of reformation and revival movements are evidences that the world is getting better and that only good is in store for this age. It is forgotten that this age is an age marked by departure from God, by the rejection of His own blessed Son and by the perversion of the Truth of God. It will culminate in the great apostasy and the manifestation of the man of sin—the son of perdition. Christendom has been even more unfaithful than Israel in Old Testament times. Judgment is in store for this age and for that which claims to be the church. The Lord has announced this long ago and it will surely come as judgment came upon Judah for all the abominable things they did. Reformation-revival movements are evidences, too, that the threatened judgment is not far away. As the end approaches God warns us and His Spirit presses home the Truth once more to awaken the consciences of men. In 2 Chron. xxxvi:15 we read the following words: "And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because He had compassion on His people, and on His dwelling place." But the next verse declares the failure of what the Lord had done in His compassion. "But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy." No remedy! an awful word it is. Judah in spite of the gracious revival under Josiah hastened on to the predicted doom, and so does this present age.

2. The Results of the Revival. The Death of Josiah.

CHAPTER XXIII:1–30

1. The People Hear the Law. 1–2. (2 Chron. xxxiv).
2. Josiah makes a Covenant. 3.
3. The Great Reformations. 4–20.
4. The Passover Celebrated. 21–23. (2 Chron. xxxv).
5. Further Statements Concerning Josiah. 24–27.
6. The Death of Josiah. 28–30.

It is a great scene with which this chapter opens. The King feels now his responsibility towards the people. All the elders of Judah and Jerusalem were called together by him. Then there was a great procession of people headed by the King, followed by the elders, the priests and the prophets and all the people both small and great. The King read before this vast assembly all the words of the book of the covenant. The King standing on a pillar, or platform, and made a solemn covenant to walk after the Lord and to keep His commandments. All the people stood by it. But it did not last very long. As far as the King was concerned there can be no question that it was real with him. However, if we read the opening chapters of Jeremiah we find that the people's consecration was but skin-deep. They did not turn unto the Lord with the whole heart, but in falsehood (Jer. iii:10).

The description of the cleansing of Judah and Jerusalem of all the abominable things (verses 4–20) shows the awful depths of vileness and wickedness into which the professing people of God had sunk. All the abominations of the flesh connected with the worship of Baal and Ashera and a host of other things flourished in the land. "And he slew all the priests of the high places that were there upon the altars, and burned men's bones upon them and returned to Jerusalem" (verse 20).

The keeping of the Passover, the blessed feast of remembrance of what Jehovah had done, follows immediately after the cleansing of the land. The full account we find in Chronicles where we give further comment (2 Chron. xxxv:

1–19). But the record declares that "there was not holden such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the Kings of Israel, nor of the Kings of Judah." The same was said of Hezekiah's passover (2 Chron. xxx:26). Hezekiah's passover was greater than any previous one and Josiah's feast was even greater than that of his great-grandfather.

And all the workers with familiar spirits (the demon possessed mediums) and other wickedness he cut off. In all this Josiah pleased Jehovah and the Spirit of God testifies to it. "And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him." Yet after these words there stands written once more the judgment message so soon to be accomplished upon Judah and Jerusalem.

Josiah died, having been shot on the battlefield at Megiddo. The Chronicles contains the details of his death (2 Chron. xxxv:20–27).

VI. Final Apostasy of Judah and the Captivity

Chapters xxiii:31-xxv.

1. Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim

CHAPTER XXIII:31–37

1. The Three Months' Reign of Jehoahaz. 31–33. (2 Chron. xxxvi-1–2)
2. Jehoiakim Made King. 34–37. (2 Chron. xxxvi:4–5).

Chronicles tells us that immediately after the death of Josiah, the people of the land took Jehoahaz (which means "Jehovah holds up") and made him King. He was not the Lord's choice, but the people's choice. He was not the eldest son and therefore the action of the people was an unlawful and a lawless one. He was an evil-doer; Josephus

speaks of him as having been vile. In the brief period he reigned he may have attempted to restore the immoral rites which his father had so completely crushed. He may have opposed Pharaoh-necho, King of Egypt.

"Necho had, after the battle of Megiddo, continued his march towards Syria. Thither, at Riblah, 'in the land of Hamath,' the victor summoned the new Jewish King.* On his arrival, Jehoahaz, who had been crowned without the leave of Necho, was put in bonds. Necho does not seem, on this occasion, to have pursued his expedition against Assyria. The great battle at Carchemish, to which the chronicler refers by anticipation (2 Chron. xxxv:20), was fought on a second expedition, three years later, when the Egyptian army under Necho was defeated with great slaughter by Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabopalassar. This was after the fall of Nineveh, and when the Babylonian or Chaldean empire had taken the place of the Assyrian. But on the present occasion Necho seems to have returned, before encountering the Assyrians, into Egypt, whither 'he brought' with him Jehoahaz, who died in captivity."†

Then the King of Egypt took the oldest son of Josiah, Eliakim, changed his name to Jehoiakim and made him King over Judah. Jehoiakim means "Jehovah raiseth up"; this name was probably selected to impress the people. He reigned eleven years. It was a most disastrous time and the beginning of the end. God's mighty prophets Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Habakkuk, Zephaniah and also Urijah were then warning and delivering their great messages.

"The reformatory work of Josiah gave place to a restoration of the former idolatry (comp. 2 Chron. xxxvi:8). As in previous reigns, it was connected with complete demoralization of the people (comp. Jer. vii:9–15; xvii:2, xix:4–9; Ezek. viii:9–18). And this not only among the laity, high and low, but equally among the priests and prophets (comp. Jer. xxiii:9–14). All the louder rose the voices of the

*As Josephus explains it.

†See Jeremiah xxii:11–12.

prophets Jeremiah, Urijah and Habakkuk. But their warnings were either unheeded and scorned, or brought on them persecution and martyrdom (2 Kings xxiv:4; Jer. xxvi:10, 11; and especially verses 20–23). Otherwise, also, it was a wretched government, characterized by public wrong, violence, oppression and covetousness. While the land was impoverished, the King indulged in luxury and built magnificent palaces, or adorned towns, by means of forced labor, which remained unpaid, and at the cost of the lives of a miserable enslaved people (Jer. xxii:13–18; Hab. ii:9–17)."*

The Book of Jeremiah will give us much more of the history of this wicked king and our annotations will lead us back to the ending days of Judah and Jerusalem. He tried to put Urijah to death because he prophesied against Jerusalem. The prophet fled to Egypt. Jehoiakim sent for him and slew him with the sword and threw his body into the graves of the common people (Jer. xxvi). He himself was buried with the burial of an ass (Jer. xxii:18–19). Another infamous deed he committed was the cutting with the pen-knife of the scroll upon which Jeremiah had written the Word of God, casting it into the fire (Jer. xxxvi).

2. Jehoiachin and Zedekiah. The Beginning of Judah's Captivity.

CHAPTER XXIV

1. Jehoiakim Servant of Nebuchadnezzar. His Death. 1–5. (2 Chron. xxxvi:6–7).
2. Jehoiachin. 6–10. (2 Chron. xxxvi:8–9).
3. The First Deportation to Babylon. 11–16.
4. Zedekiah, the Last King and His Rebellion. 17–20.

The foe of Judah, the chosen instrument of the Lord to execute His wrath upon the people and the city, now comes to the front. Jeremiah had predicted the coming judgment; Isaiah and the other prophets did the same. Then

*Dr. A. Edersheim.

Jehoiakim proclaimed a fast (Jer. xxxvi:9). It was nothing but hypocrisy. Immediately after he cut the scroll to pieces and cast it into the fire. Jeremiah and his secretary Baruch hardly escaped with their lives. Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, bound Jehoiakim in fetters to carry him to Babylon (2 Chron. xxxvi:6). This was not done because Nebuchadnezzar was suddenly called to Babylon. The book of Daniel introduces us more fully to this great monarch, the head of the Times of the Gentiles; we give in the annotations on that book more information about his character and history.*

Jehoiakim became a vassal of Nebuchadnezzar. Three years later he rebelled. Punishment followed swiftly. It was "at the commandment of the Lord."

After the death of Jehoiakim, buried with the burial of an ass (Jer. xxii:18–19), his son Johoiachin reigned in his stead. He was eighteen years old† when he ascended the throne and reigned only three months and ten days (2 Chron. xxxvi:9). He is also known by the names of Joiachin (Ezek. i:2) and Coniah (Jer. xxii:24, 28, xxxvii:1). Then Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem. The city surrendered and the

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*"Nabopalassar, founded the new Babylonian empire, which began the period of the Chaldees—as they are chiefly known to us in Scripture. Here we may at once indicate that he was succeeded by his son, Nebuchadrezzar (or Nebuchadnezzar), and he in turn by his son, Evil-merodach, who, after two years' reign, was dethroned by his brother-in-law, Neriglissar. After four years (559-556 B. C.) Neriglissar was succeeded by his youthful son, Laborosoarchod. After his murder, Nabonidos (Nabunit, Nabûnâ'id) acceded to the government, but after seventeen years' reign (555–539 B. C.) was dethroned by Cyrus. The eldest son of Nabonidos, and heir to the throne, was Belshazzar, whom we know from the Book of Daniel, where, in a not unusual manner, he is designated as the son, that is, the descendant of Nebuchadrezzar (Dan. v:2, 11, 18). We infer that, while his father, Nabonidos, went to meet Cyrus, to whom he surrendered, thereby preserving his life, Belshazzar had been left as "king" in Babylon at the taking of which he perished in the night of his feast, described in Holy Scripture."—See "The Prophet Daniel," by A. C. Gaebelein.

†2 Chronicles xxxvi:9 gives his age as eight years; it is evidently the error of a scribe.

long predicted punishment was executed. At the first invasion under the reign of Jehoiakim, when Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem, a part of the vessels of the house of God were transported to Babylon, as well as the noble children, among whom were Daniel and his companions (Dan. i:1–6). With the second siege and conquest of Jerusalem all was taken and the people were taken away captives, among them was the prophet Ezekiel (Jer. lii:28; Ezek. i:1–2; Jer. xxix:1). A remnant, however, was left behind; Jehoiachin was carried into captivity. The last chapter of this book gives his fate. He never returned. Important is to note the curse which was pronounced upon him. Jeremiah pronounced it upon Coniah (Jehoiachin). "Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days; for no man of his seed shall prosper sitting upon the throne of David and ruling any more in Judah." (Jer. xxii:28–30). He had children; no offspring of the line of Solomon was ever to occupy the throne of David. But there were the descendants of David through another line, that is, Nathan's; no curse rested upon that line. The virgin Mary, the mother of our Lord, was of David through Nathan (Luke iii:31). Joseph, to whom Mary the virgin was espoused, was a son of David through Solomon's line.

Nebuchadnezzar made Mattaniah, the youngest son of Josiah, King over Judah (compare verse 18 with chapter xxiii:31). His name means "the gift of Jehovah" and he changed it into Zedekiah, "the righteousness of Jehovah." Here is no doubt a prophetic hint. When Judah and Jerusalem went down in judgment, in unspeakable ruin and shame, God indicated in the very names of the last King that there would yet come from David's line. He, who is His own precious gift and in whom righteousness will be given and established. Zedekiah filled full the measure of wickedness and finally rebelled against the King of Babylon.

3. The Siege of Jerusalem and Judah's Complete Overthrow.

CHAPTER XXV

1. The Last Siege and Complete Overthrow. 1–21. (2 Chron. xxxvi: 17—20).
2. Gedaliah. 22–26.
3. Jehoiachin's Captivity and Release. 27–30.

Zedekiah's rebellion was a great offence. He had sworn in Jehovah's name to be loyal to Nebuchadnezzar (2 Chron. xxxvi:13; Ezek. xvii:13). We find more light thrown upon this King and his rebellion in the book of Jeremiah. Ambassadors from Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon came to Jerusalem to see Zedekiah (Jer. xxvii). A combined revolution was probably contemplated. Zedekiah sent at the same time a message to Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon (Jer. xxix:3); the prophet Jeremiah used this opportunity to send a God-given communication to the exiles in Babylon (Jer. xxix:1, etc.). The news of Zedekiah's schemes must have reached the captives, for they expected an early return.* False prophets, Satan's instruments, gave them their lying messages. Prominent among them was Hananiah who received his deserved punishment for his lying words (Jer. xxviii). Once more the city was besieged. A great famine prevailed. What happened in the doomed city and Jeremiah's great ministry as well as suffering may be learned from his prophecies. Consult especially the following passages: Jer. xxi:1–2, xxxvii:3, xxxiv:2–6, xxxviii. Jeremiah charged with treacherous designs had been cast into a dungeon, but was later delivered out of the miry pit and brought before the King, who declared himself willing to follow Jeremiah's advice. What followed we give from Edersheim's Bible history:

"Meantime the siege was continuing, without hope of relief. Tyre suffered straits similar to those of Jerusalem, while Ammon, Moab, Edom and the Philistines had not

*The Prophet Ezekiel was especially used to warn against these false hopes. See annotations on Ezekiel.

only withdrawn from the alliance, but were waiting to share in the spoil of Judah (Ezek. xxv). At length a gleam of hope appeared. An Egyptian army, under their King Hophra, the grandson of Necho, advanced through Phoenicia, and obliged the Chaldeans to raise the siege of Jerusalem (Jer. xxxvii:5–7). The exultation and reaction in Jerusalem may be imagined—and it was probably in consequence of it that Jeremiah, who still predicted calamity, was cast into prison (*ib.* verse 4). But the relief of Jerusalem was brief. The Egyptian army had to retire, and the siege of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans was resumed, and that under even more disadvantageous circumstances to the besieged. To the other calamities that of famine was now added (2 Kings xxv:3). Of the horrors of that time Jeremiah has left a record in the Book of Lamentations (comp. i:19, ii:11, 12, 20, iv:3–10). The last resistance was soon overcome. On the ninth day of the fourth month (Tammuz), in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the enemy gained possession of the northern suburb (2 Kings xxv:4; Jer. xxxix:2, 3, lii:6, 7). Before the middle gate the Babylonian captains held a council of war (Jer. xxxix:2, 3). Then the king and all the regular army sought safety in flight during the darkness of the night (Jer. xxxix:4). As the Chaldeans held the northern part of the city, they fled southwards. Between the two walls, through the Tyropoeon, then out of the 'fountain-gate,' and through the king's garden, they made haste to gain the Jordan. But their flight could not remain unobserved. They were pursued and overtaken in the plains of Jericho. The soldiers dispersed in various directions. But the king himself and his household were taken captives, and carried to the headquarters at Riblah, where Nebuchadnezzar himself was at the time. Here Zedekiah was formally arraigned and sentence given against him. His daughters were set free, but his sons were slain before him. It was the last sight the king saw. His eyes were put out; he was bound hand and feet with double fetters of brass, and so carried to Babylon. There he died in ward (Jer. lii:11).

"The remainder of this mournful tale is soon told. After the flight and capture of the king, the city could not long hold out. A month later, and on the seventh day of the fifth month (Ab) Nebuzar-adan ('Nebo gave posterity') penetrated into the city. The Temple was set on fire, as well as the king's palace. The whole city was reduced to ruins and ashes, and the walls which had defended it were broken down (2 Kings xxv:9, 10). After three days the work of destruction was completed; and ever afterwards was the 10th (9th) of Ab mourned as the fatal day of Jerusalem's fall (Jer. liii:12; Zech. vii:3, 5, viii:19). 'The rest of the people left in the city,' and those who had previously passed to the enemy, together with the remnant of the multitude,' were carried away (2 Kings xxv:11). We can scarcely be mistaken in regarding these captives as the chief part of the non-combatant population of Jerusalem and Judah."

Jeremiah's history and how he was found in prison when Jerusalem fell we shall learn from his book.

The administration of the conquered country was then entrusted by Nebuchadnezzar to Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam (2 Kings xxii:12; Jer. xxvi:24). Gedaliah dwelt in Mizpah. He held his office only two months and was murdered by Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah (see Jer. xl:8–16 and xli:1–9).

Jehoiachin's release needs no further comment. In the Second Book of Chronicles we shall follow again this mournful history. The seventy year captivity was on. The Word of the Lord through Jeremiah that "the land should enjoy her Sabbaths, for as long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill three score and ten years" (2 Chron. xxxvi:21).

We add the words of another:

"Again is the land keeping Sabbath. And again is it 'stillness unto God,' till His Voice shall waken land and people, Whose are land and people, dominion and peace: till He shall come Who is alike the goal and the fulfillment of all past history and prophecy—'a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.' "

Appendix

THE MOABITE STONE.

This ancient monument was discovered by R. F. Klein in 1868 at Dîbân in Moab.

The inscription consists of thirty-four lines (the last two being undecipherable), and was written by Mesha, King of Moab to commemorate his successful revolt from the yoke of Israel, recorded in 2 Kings i:1 and chapter iii; and to honor his god Chemosh, to whom he ascribed his successes.

The writing is in the ancient Hebrew characters, which continued in use down to 139 B.C., but was gradually replaced by the modern square Hebrew characters which are in use today.

1. "I, Mesha son of Chemosh-Melech king of Moab, the Di-
2. bonite. My father reigned over Moab thirty years and I reign-
3. ed after my father. I made this monument to Chemosh at Kork-
hah. A monument of sal-
4. vation, for he saved me from all invaders, and let me see my desire
upon all my enemies. Om-
5. ri [was] king of Israel, and he oppressed Moab many days, for
Chemosh was angry with his
6. land. His son followed him, and he also said: I will oppress Moab.
In my days Che[mosh] said;
7. I will see my desire on him and his house. And Israel surely per-
ished for ever. Omri took the land of
8. Medeba and [Israel] dwelt in it during his days and half the days
of his son, altogether forty years. But there dwelt in it
9. Chemosh in my days. I built Baal-Meon and made therein the
ditches; I built
10. Kirjathaim. The men of Gad dwelt in the land of Ataroth from
of old, and built there the king of
11. Israel Ataroth; and I made war against the town and seized it.
And I slew all the [people of]
12. the town, for the pleasure of Chemosh and Moab: I captured from
thence the Arel of Dodah and tore
13. him before Chemosh in Kerioth: And I placed therein the men of
Sh(a)r(o)n, and the men
14. of M(e)kh(e)rth. And Chemosh said to me: Go, seize Nebo
upon Israel; and

15. I went in the night and fought against it from the break of dawn
till noon: and I took
16. it, and slew all, 7,000 men, [boys?], women, [girls?]
17. and female slaves, for to Ashtar-Chemosh I devoted them. And I
took from it the Arels of Yahveh, and tore them before Che-
mosh. And the king of Israel built
18. Jahaz, and dwelt in it, while he waged war against me; Chemosh
drove him out before me. And
19. I took from Moab 200 men, all chiefs, and transported them to
Jahaz, which I took,
20. to add to it Dibon. I built Korkhah, the wall of the forests and
the wall
21. of the citadel: I built its gates, and I built its towers. And
22. I built the house of Moloch, and I made sluices of the water-ditches
in the middle
23. of the town. And there was no cistern in the middle of the town of
Korkhah, and I said to all the people, Make for
24. yourselves every man a cistern in his house. And I dug the canals
for Korkhah by means of the prisoners
25. of Israel. I built Aroer, and I made the road in [the province of]
the Arnon. [And]
26. I built Beth-Bamoth, for it was destroyed. I built Bezer, for in
ruins
27. [it was. And all the chiefs] of Dibon were 50, for all Dibon is
subject; and I placed
28. one hundred [chiefs] in the towns which I added to the land: I
built
29. Beth-Medeba and Beth-diblathaim and Beth-Baal-Meon, and
transported thereto the [shepherds]? . . .
30. and the pastors] of the flocks of the land. And at Horonaim dwelt
there
31. . . . And Chemosh said to me, Go down, make war upon
Horonaim. I went down [and made war]
32. . . . And Chemosh dwelt in it during my days. I went up
from thence . . "

Translation by Dr. Neubauer.

FIRST CHRONICLES

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The Books of the Chronicles

INTRODUCTION

The Books of the Chronicles are called in the Hebrew "*Dbri-Hayyomim*" which means "words of the days," that is the events of the times. In the Greek translation they are known by the name "*Paraleipomena*", that is "things omitted." Our English title "Chronicles" is adopted from the Latin translation, the Vulgate, because the title there is "*Liber Chronicorum.*"

In the English Bible the Chronicles occupy a different place from that in the original Hebrew Bible. As stated before, the Hebrew Scriptures are divided into three main divisions; the Law, the Prophets and the Writings. This last section of the Hebrew Scriptures contains the following books: Psalms, Proverbs, Job; the five books known as *Megilloth*, Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and Esther. These are followed by Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles. The Chronicles therefore stand at the close of the Hebrew Scriptures. That this arrangement is not without meaning in connection with the New Testament, has been pointed out by others. "The genealogies with which Chronicles begins lead up to the genealogy of Matthew I and the commencement of the New Testament. They end with the ending of the Kingdom, and the question of Cyrus,"who is there?" (2 Chron. xxxvi:23) is followed by another "Where is He?" (Matthew ii:2) and the proclamation of the Kingdom by the true King and His forerunner. Chronicles begins with the first Adam and leads on to the last Adam."

AUTHORSHIP AND DATE.

Ezra has been mentioned as the possible author of Chronicles, which, however, cannot be proven. Nothing whatever is known of the instrument who was used to write these historical books. From the prominence which is given to the history and organization of the Levitic priesthood and the deep interest shown in the minor officials of the Temple, especially the singers, it has been surmised that the author may have been a Levite. Beyond this nothing definite can be said. The author used by the Spirit of God must remain unknown to man, but he is known to God. In the books are mentioned repeatedly other books and histories to which the author of Chronicles refers. These include the following: a book of the Kings of Israel and Judah,

(2 Chron. xxvii:7; xxxv:27; xxxvi:8); a book of the Kings of Judah and Israel (2 Chron. xvi:11; xxv:26; xxviii:26; xxxii:32); a book of the Kings of Israel (2 Chron. xxiv:27); a commentary of the books of Kings (2 Chron. xxiv:27); a history of the prophets Samuel, Nathan and Gad (1 Chron. xxix:29); a history of the prophets Nathan, Abijah, the Shilonite, and Iddo (2 Chron. ix:29); a history of the prophets, Shemaiah and Iddo (1 Chron. xii:15); a history of the prophet Jehu (2 Chron. xx:24); a commentary of the prophet Iddo (2 Chron. xiii:22); Isaiah's history of Uzziah (2 Chron. xxvi:22); a history of the prophet Isaiah (2 Chron. xxxii:32) and a history of the prophet of Manasseh's day (2 Chron. xxxiii:19). It will be seen that there are just twelve sources mentioned. It will be seen that the first four are historical and the remaining eight are prophetic. While some of these references must have been books and histories now unknown to us, the main references are to the preceding books of the Kings and to the first part of the prophet Isaiah.

The date of Chronicles is fixed by the first book. 1 Chron. vi:15 shows that the book was written after the captivity. We find also the names of the descendants of Zerubbabel given in 1 Chron. iii:19–24. Inasmuch as Zerubbabel was one of the leaders of the exile, who returned from the captivity, and his descendants are given, Chronicles must have been written some time after the return from Babylon. The diction of the books of Chronicles also bears witness to this. The Hebrew is substantially the same which is employed in the books of Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther, which were written immediately after the captivity. It is mixed with Aramaeisms, which marks the corruption of the pure Hebrew by the chaldaean language which the captives learned in Babylon. The pure Hebrew had been lost in Babylon. Even the orthography bears witness to it as every Hebrew scholar knows.

RATIONALISTIC OBJECTIONS.

Rationalists, the so-called higher critics, speak much of the discrepancies and contradictions contained in Chronicles. That there are variations from previous records cannot be denied, but variations are not contradictions. That there are certain corruptions in the text must be acknowledged, and some of them will be pointed out in the annotations. But the charge that the writer of Chronicles contradicts himself, is wholly unfounded. The following passages have been used to demonstrate this supposed contradiction: 2 Chron. xiv:1 and 2 Chron. xv:19; 2 Chron. xiv:2 and 2 Chron. xv:17; 2 Chron. xvii:6 and 2 Chron. xx:33; 2 Chron. xxx:26 and xxxv:18. A careful perusal will show that there is nothing contradictory between these passages. Higher criticism is often superficial and we fear just as often wilfully blind and even ready to cast doubt upon the inspired records.

THE MARKS OF INSPIRATION.

The omissions and additions we find in the Chronicles in comparison with the books of Samuel and Kings are not the marks of an imperfect human hand. They are the marks of inspiration. We found that the books of Kings contained the history of God's government in Israel. Kings omits much of the history of the house of Judah and only touches upon that which relates to the connection of Judah with the house of Israel during that period.

"The Books of Chronicles give us the history of the same period under another aspect, that is, that of blessing and of the grace of God; and, more particularly, they give us the history of the house of David with respect to which this grace was manifested. We shall see this verified in a multitude of instances.

"These Books preserve God's history of His people, recorded by the Holy Ghost, as He loved to remember it, exhibiting only such faults as require to be known in order to understand the instructions of His grace."*

It is in these distinctions we discover the supernatural guidance of the penman.

*Synopsis of the Bible.

PARALLEL PASSAGES.

A comparison with the books of Samuel, Kings and certain chapters in Isaiah is necessary in the study of Chronicles. To assist in this, we give a complete list of the parallel passages with which Chronicles should be studied.

1 Sam. 27	1 Chron.	12:1–7	
29:1–3	"	12:19–22	
31	"	10	
2 Sam. 5:1–5	"	11:1–3	
5:6–10	"	11:4–9	
5:11–16	"	14:1–7	
5:17–25	"	14:8–17	
6:1–11	"	13	
6:12–23	"	15 and 16	
7	"	17	
8	"	18	
10	"	19	
11:1–27	"	20:1	
12:29–31	"	20:1–3	
23:8–39	"	11:10–47	
24:1–9	"	21:1–6	
24:1–9	"	27:23, 24	
24:10–17	"	21:7–17	
24:18–24	"	21:18–22: 1	
1 Kings 2:1	"	23:1	
2:1–4	"	28:20, 21	
2:10–12	"	29:23–30	
2:46	2 Chron.	1:1	
3:4–15	"	1:2–13	
5	"	2	
6	"	3:1–14; 4:9	
7:15–21	"	3:15–17	
7:23–26	"	4:2–5	
7:38–46	"	4:6, 10, 17	
7:47–50	"	4:18–22	
7:51	"	5:1	
8	"	5:2; 7:10	
9:1–9	"	7:11–22	
9:10–28	"	8	
10:1–13	"	9:1–12	
10:14–25	"	9:13–24	
10:26–29	"	9:25–28; 1:14–17	
11:41–43	"	9:29–31	
12:1–19	"	10	
12:21–24	"	11:1–4	
12:25	"	11:5–12	
12:26–31	"	11:13–17	
14:22–24	"	12:1	
14:25–28	"	12:2–12	
14:21, 29–31	"	12:13–16	
15:1	"	13:1, 2	
15:6	"	13:2–31	
15:7, 8	"	13:22; 14:1	
15:11, 12	"	14:1–5	
15:13–15	"	15:16–18	
15:16–22	"	16:1–6	
15:23, 24	"	16:11–14	
22:1–40, 44	"	18	
22:41–43	"	17:1; 20:31–33	
22:45	"	20:34	
22:47–49	"	20:35–37	
22:50	"	21:1	
2 Kings 1:1; 3:4, 5	2 Chron.	20:1–3	
8:16–19	"	21:2–7	
8:20–22	"	21:8–15	
8:23, 24	"	21:18–20	
8:25–27	"	22:1–4	
8:28, 29; 9:1–28	"	22:5–7, 9	
10:11–14	"	22:8	
11:1–3	"	22:10–12	
11:4–20	"	23	
11:21; 12:1–3	"	24:1–3	
12:6–16	"	24:4–14	
12:17, 18	"	24:23, 24	
12:19–21	"	24:25–27	
14:1–6	"	25:1–4	
14:7	"	25:11–16	
14:8–14	"	25:17–24	
14:17–20	"	25:25–28	
14:21, 22; 15:1–4	"	26:1–15	
15:6, 7, 27, 28	"	26:22, 23	
15:32–35	"	27:1–8	
15:38	"	27:9	
16:1, 2	"	28:1, 2	
16:3, 4, 6	"	28:3–8	
16:7	"	28:16–19	
15:29	"	28:20	
16:8–18	"	28:21–25	
16:19, 20	"	28:26, 27	
18:1–3	"	29:1, 2	
18:13	Isa.	36:1	
18:14–16	2 Chron.	32:2–8	
20:1–11	2 Chron.	32:24; Isa. 38	
20:12–19	Isa.	39:1–8	
18:17–37	2 Chron.	32:9–19	
	Isa.	36:2–22	
19:1–5	2 Chron.	32:20	
	Isa.	37:1–4	
19:6, 7	Isa.	37:6, 7	
19:8–19	2 Chron.	32:17	
	Isa.	37:8–20	
19:20–37	2 Chron.	32:21	
	Isa.	37:21–38	
20:20, 21	2 Chron.	32:32, 33	
21:1–16	"	33:1–9	
21:17, 18	"	33:18–20	
21:19–26	"	33:21–25	
22:1, 2	"	34:1–7	
22:3–20	"	34:8–28	
23:1–3	"	34:29–32	
23:21–23	"	35:1–19	
23:24–26	"	34:33	
23:28–30	"	35:20–27	
23:30–33	"	36:1–3	
23:34–37	"	36:4, 5	
24:8, 9	"	36:9	
24:15–17	"	36:10	
24:18, 19	"	36:11, 12	
24:20	"	36:13–16	
25:8–21	"	36:18–21	

The reader should look up these parallel passages. Especially should the previous annotations in Samuel and Kings be read in connection with Chronicles.

The Division of the First Book of Chronicles

The First Book of Chronicles begins with genealogies which start with Adam and lead up to the time of the restoration from the captivity and sometime after. The tables do not mention all the names; many are omitted. This makes clear at once the object of these long lists of names. Only those are recorded who were related to the accomplishment of the purpose of God and who were the divinely chosen channels through whom the Lord carried out His purpose. Many lessons may be gathered from these genealogies, so often considered unprofitable. Even to those opening chapters of Chronicles, applies the statement in 2 Timothy iii:16, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." The main part of the book begins with the miserable end of Saul, the crowning of David at Hebron and the establishment of his kingdom. Especially is that made prominent which is passed over in the book of Kings, David's relation to the public worship of God and to the building of the Temple, which his son Solomon built after him.

We divide the first Book of Chronicles into four parts:

I. **THE GENEALOGIES.** Chapters i–ix.
   1. **From Adam to the Edomites.** Chapter i.
   2. **The Sons of Israel and the Tribe of Judah.** Chapters ii–iv:23.
   3. **Simeon, Reuben, Gad and Manasseh.** Chapter iv:24–v.
   4. **Levi.** Chapter vi.
   5. **Issachar, Naphtali, half Manasseh, Ephraim and Asher.** Chapter vii.

6. Benjamin. Chapter viii.
7. The Record of the Inhabitants of Jerusalem after the Return. Chapter ix.

II. THE OVERTHROW AND END OF SAUL. Chapter x.

III. THE CROWNING OF DAVID AND ESTABLISHMENT OF HIS KINGDOM. Chapters xi–xxi.
1. David in Hebron. Chapter xi.
2. David's Warriors and Friends. Chapter xii.
3. The Ark removed from Kirjath-jearim. Chapter xiii.
4. David's Increase and Blessing. Chapter xiv.
5. The Ark Brought to Jerusalem. Chapters xv–xvi:3.
6. The Great Celebration. Chapter xvi:4–43.
7. The Covenant and the Promise. Chapter xvii.
8. David's Wars and Successful Reign. Chapter xviii.
9. The Wars with Ammon, Syria and the Philistines. Chapters xix–xx.
10. The Numbering of the People and the Punishment. Chapter xxi.

IV. PREPARATIONS FOR THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE. DAVID'S DEATH. Chapters xxii–xxix.
1. The Preparations and Charge to Solomon. Chapter xxii.
2. The Numbering and Arrangement of the Levites. Chapter xxiii.
3. The Twenty-four Courses of the Priests. Chapter xxiv.
4. The Singers and Musicians of the Temple. Chapter xxv.
5. The Porters and other Temple Officers. Chapter xxvi.
6. The Captains, Princes and Various Officers and Counsellors. Chapter xxvii.
7. The Last Acts of David and His Death. Chapters xxviii–xxix.

Analysis and Annotations

I. The Genealogies

Chapter i–ix

1. From Adam to the Edomites

CHAPTER I.

1. Adam to Noah. 1–4.
2. The Sons of Japheth. 5–7.
3. The Sons of Ham. 8–16.
4. The Sons of Shem. 17–23.
5. From Shem to Abraham. 24–28.
6. Ishmael and his Sons. 29–31.
7. Abraham's Sons from Keturah. 32–33.
8. The Sons of Isaac. 34.
9. The Sons of Esau. 35–42.
10. The Kings and Dukes of Edom. 43–54.

The nine chapters of genealogical tables is the largest collection of Hebrew names in the Bible. These names are full of the deepest interest, as they often bear in their meaning a message. We have pointed out this fact many times in the annotations of the preceding books. Here is unquestionably a mine of great wealth for the diligent searcher: many lessons connected with these names have been but little understood.* The names given in this chapter are all found in the book of Genesis (Chapters v, x, xi, xxv and xxxvi). The ten generations before the flood, ending with Noah begin the list. The descendants of Cain are not mentioned. Then follow the names of the offspring of Noah's sons, Japheth, Ham and Shem. Fourteen nations descended from Japheth; thirty-one from Ham and twenty-six from Shem. No person is able to trace all these races in history, but He who has recorded their names knows also

*A good Concordance or dictionary of these names and their meaning is needed for such research.

their history and their wanderings. And so He knows all His creatures. But above all does He know His own people by name.

Shem's line is followed to Abraham, the father of the nation. The sons of Abraham are mentioned first as Isaac and Ishmael, not in their right order. Ishmael preceding Isaac. The sons of Ishmael are therefore given first, as well as the sons which Abraham had from Keturah. Then follows the statement, "And Abraham begat Isaac. The sons of Isaac: Esau and Israel" (verse 34). Esau's sons and descendants are given before the sons of Israel; these we find in the second chapter. Then follows the list of the kings and dukes (or chiefs) of Edom. King Jobab (verse 44) is considered by some to be Job and that he ruled in Dinahab (Genesis xxxv:32).

2. The Sons of Israel and the Descendants of Judah

CHAPTERS II–IV:23

1. The Sons of Israel. 1–2.
2. The Sons of Judah. 3–12.
3. The Offspring of Jesse. 13–17.
4. The Descendants of Caleb. 18–24.
5. The Descendants of Jerahmeel. 25–41.
6. Other Descendants of Caleb. 42–55.

After the twelve sons of Israel (Jacob) are named, Judah and his sons are mentioned. The entire chapter is devoted to the descendants of Judah. Judah is given the prominent place, because from this tribe the promised Messiah was to come (Gen. xlix:8–12). The sons of Jesse (verses 13–17) are given, seven in number. In 1 Sam. xvi:5–11 and xvii:12–14 eight are mentioned. This is not a discrepancy. One of these sons probably died childless and his name would therefore have no place in this genealogy. Prominent in this chapter are the sons of Hezron, Jerahmeel, Ram (the Aram of Matt. i:3) and Chelubai. The latter is Caleb. Caleb is here given as a son of Hezron. Is this the same Caleb who was one of the spies, the son of Jephunneh (Num.

xiii:6, 30, xiv:6, 24, etc.)? Critics claim that he is the son of Jephunneh and pointed this out as one of the inaccuracies. However, it is impossible that Caleb the son of Hezron, could be identical with Caleb, the son of Jephunneh. Caleb the son of Hezron was the great-grandfather of Bezaleel (verses 19–20), who was selected with Aholiab to do the work in connection with the tabernacle (Exod. xxxi:1). He must therefore have been the ancestor of Caleb the son of Jephunneh. And furthermore, Caleb the son of Jephunneh is mentioned in Chapter iv:15. That in verse 49 a daughter of Caleb (Achsah) is mentioned is not sufficient proof that the son of Jephunneh is meant.

From David to Zedekiah

CHAPTER III

1. The Sons of David. 1–9.
2. David's Line to Zedekiah. 10–15.
3. The Sons of Jeconiah. 16–24.

Six sons were born to David during his reign in Hebron. Four are mentioned as the offspring from Bath-shua, another name for Bath-sheba (2 Sam. xi:3). Then follow the names of other nine sons. As the name Elishama appears twice, it has been suggested that one is Elishua (2 Sam. v:14). Eglah is called David's wife. Some claim that it is Michal, who became childless after her mockery when David danced before the ark. Then the line of Solomon is traced up to Zedekiah. The usurping Queen Athaliah (2 Kings xi:3) is omitted, for she was not of the house of David. Then follows the list of the sons of Jeconiah. The name "Assir" which follows Jeconiah in verse 17 means "the captive." "Jeconiah, the captive", is the proper rendering. His son Salathiel was therefore born in the captivity (Matt. i:12). Jeconiah was written "childless," which does not mean that he was to have no sons, but that no son of his should sit upon the throne of David (Jer. xxii:30). The son of Salathiel was Zerubbabel (Matt. i:12; Ezra iii: 2, v: 2; Hag. i:1, 12). It seems that, in some way, the

different names as they appear in the Hebrew text were dislocated. The following arrangement has been suggested to remove the difficulty.

"And the sons of Jeconiah, the captive, Salathiel, his son. And the sons of Salathiel; Zerubbabel and Shimei; and the sons of Zerubbabel; Meshullam, Hananiah and Shelomith their sister. And Hashubah, and Ohel, and Berechiah, and Hasadiah, Jushab-hezed. And Malchiram, and Rephaiah, and Shenazar, Jecamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah. The sons of Hananiah; Pelatiah and Jesiah; the sons of Rephaiah; his son Arnan, his son Obadiah, his son Shecaniah."

Additional Genealogies of Judah

CHAPTER IV:1–23

1. The Sons of Judah. 1–8.
2. Jabez more Honorable. 9–10.
3. Further Descendants of Judah. 11–20.
4. Descendants of Shelah. 21–23.

Hur and Shobal, mentioned in the first verse, were the sons of Caleb the son of Hezron. The families of the Zorathites sprang from Reaiah, the son of Shobal. Jabez is especially mentioned. Jabez means "He causes pain." "And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me ! And God granted him that which he requested." The occasion when this prayer-vow was uttered is not given; probably it was made in connection with the expulsion of the Canaanites from the land and the acquisition of their territory. It was a simple prayer of child-like faith. For blessing, for increase, for companionship and for preservation Jabez cast himself upon the God of Israel, and He granted him his request. Blessing came to Jabez's soul; his coast was enlarged; the hand of the Lord was with him and kept him from evil. God never disappoints faith.

Then we have mentioned in this chapter the craftsmen; Geharashim (verse 14) means "valley of the craftsmen; the workers in fine linen (verse 21); and those who were potters (verse 23).

3. Simeon, Reuben, Gad and Manasseh

CHAPTER IV:24–V

1. The Sons of Simeon. 24–43.
2. The Sons of Reuben. Chapter V:1–10.
3. The Children of God and half Manasseh. V:11–26.

The account of the Simeonites is interesting. Some of their families had increased so much that they had no pasture for their flocks. Some went then to Gedor and found fat pasture and quietness. Others went to Mount Seir, and five hundred of them smote the Amalekites.

Reuben was the firstborn, and the Chronicles state briefly why Reuben was not mentioned first in these genealogies. His birthright was given to the sons of Joseph. Judah, however, had the pre-eminence "of him came the prince." This refers to David and to Him who came from him after the flesh, Messiah the Prince. The Syriac version makes this paraphrase, "of Judah is the King, the Messiah." In verse 6 Tiglath-pileser* is mentioned. He carried away Beerah, the Prince of the Reubenites.

The Hagarites, mentioned in verse 10, were no doubt the descendants of Hagar through Ishmael. They were nomads, who wandered over the desert lands of the trans-Jordan territory. The tribe of Gad occupied the lands north of Reuben and eastward from the Jordan to the desert. The genealogies of the chiefs mentioned here were compiled during the reign of Jotham of Judah and Jeroboam of Israel (verse 17). Another war† with the Hagarites is recorded in verses 18–22. Here prayer is mentioned again. "They cried to God in the battle, and He was entreated of them,

*Not Tiglath-pilneser; it is an erroneous spelling.

†Some take that this is the same war mentioned in verse 10

because they put their trust in Him." The Lord delights to record those who trust in Him.

4. Levi

CHAPTER VI

1. The High-priestly Line. 1–15.
2. Levitical Genealogies. 16–30.
3. David's chief Musicians. 31–48.

The high-priestly line is first given, starting with Levi, and followed down to the exile. From Eleazar the son of Aaron, twenty-two generations are named. Moses is not mentioned in this list. With Aaron his brother he is called a priest (Psalm xcix:6), yet he was chosen as the great leader of the people before the consecration of the levitical priesthood. This is the reason why his name is not found here. The last priest named before the captivity is Jehozadak, (also called Zozadak). He was carried into captivity and was the father of Joshua, the high-priest, who returned from Babylon (Ezra iii:2, v:2; Neh. xii:26; Hag. i:1, 12; Zech. vi).

After the genealogies of the sons of Levi, who were not priests, the list of the names of David's singers and musicians is given. "These are they whom David set over the service of song in the house of the Lord, after that the ark had rest. And they ministered before the dwelling place of the tabernacle of the congregation with singing, until Solomon had built the house of the Lord in Jerusalem, and then they waited on their office according to their order." Heman stands first. He was Samuel's grandson. Psalm lxxxviii is by Heman, the Ezralite. Asaph, the son of Berachiah, (verse 39) was the poet-prophet. Psalms l and lxxiii–lxxxiii bear his name. The sons of Asaph are later mentioned as choristers of the temple (1 Chron. xxv:1–2; 2 Chron. xx:40; Ezra ii:41, etc.). Two other prominent persons bore the name of Asaph; Asaph, the recorder to King Hezekiah, (2 Kings xviii:18; Isaiah xxxvi:3), and Asaph, the

forester under Artaxerxes (Neh. ii:8). Ethan or Jeduthun ix:16, xvi:41, xxv:1; 2 Chron. xxxv:15, is the author of Psalm lxxxix.

5. Issachar, Naphtali, half Manasseh, Ephraim and Asher

CHAPTER VII

1. Issachar. 1–5.
2. Of Benjamin. 6–12.
3. Naphtali. 13.
4. Half Manasseh. 14–19.
5. Ephraim. 20–29.
6. Asher. 30–40.

The other tribes are given except Dan and Zebulun, which are missing. Issachar's had the territory between the highlands and the Jordan valley. Their warriors numbered 87,000, taken most likely from David's census. Only three sons of Benjamin are mentioned in verse 6; five are given in chapter viii:1. What became of the other five? In Genesis xlvi:21 we find ten names. The others had most likely become extinct in the awful slaughter recorded in Judges (see Chap. xx). All these tables are more or less imperfect. This does not in anyway affect the question of inspiration. No doubt there are deeper lessons connected with many of these names and arrangement of them, which we do not know.

"These genealogies were imperfect. The condition of Israel bore the impress of the ruin which had befallen them; but also that of the goodness of God who had brought back a remnant, and who had preserved all that was needful to place those who formed it in the record of His people. If the needful proof to give them a title to this were wanting, such as were of the people ceased to enjoy their proper privileges, and the priests their sacredotal position, until a priest stood up with Urim and with Thummim. For these genealogies served as a means to recognize the people. Happy he who had preserved his own, and who had so appreciated the heritage of Jehovah as to attach value to it! It was

a proof of faith; for it might have been said, Of what use are these genealogies in Babylon ?"*

6. Benjamin

CHAPTER VIII

1. The Genealogies of Benjamin. 1–28.
2. The House of Saul. 29–40.

In comparing this list with Gen. xlvi:21 we find some differences. The names of Benjamites include many who were born in the captivity and who returned to the land and dwelt in Jerusalem. Twice we read "those dwelt in Jerusalem" (verses 28, 32). Some of the names are found in the list of restored exiles in Ezra (Chap. ii). Benjamin being brought back from the exile, their loyalty to Judah and the temple was rewarded by God. The following passages will give further light on Benjamin's connection with Judah and sharing the blessing of the return from Babylon (Ezra i:5, ii; iv:1; Neh. vii; xi:4, 7, 31; xii:34).

The genealogy of Saul stands last in this chapter. The overthrow of Saul in Chapter x forms the beginning of the historical records in Chronicles. The son of Jonathan mentioned in verse 34 as Merib-baal is Mephibosheth (2 Sam. ii:8; iv:4).

7. The Record of the Inhabitants of Jerusalem after the Return

CHAPTER IX

1. The Restoration. 1–2.
2. Different Residents in Jerusalem. 3–9.
3. The Priests. 10–13.
4. The Levites. 14–16.
5. Porters and Levites; their Duties. 17–34.
6. The House of Saul. 35–44.

All Israel was reckoned by genealogies, which means that from the beginning of the nation, public records were kept. The name of every individual and the family and tribe to

*Synopsis of the Bible.

which they belonged were carefully registered. This complete registry was contained in the book of the Kings of Israel and Judah, which does not mean the two books of Kings. The genealogies contained in the preceding chapters were condensed from the larger registry in the archives of Israel and Judah. Such genealogical registers were likewise kept during the captivity. The names registered in the rest of this chapter are the names of the inhabitants of Jerusalem after the exile. Almost all the names are also found in Nehemiah xi with some marked differences. The genealogy of the house of Saul is repeated once more (see viii:29–38), evidently, as the connecting link with the next chapter.

It is beyond the scope of our work to follow these genealogical registries at greater length, or to attempt the solution of many supposed difficulties.

II. The Overthrow and End of Saul

CHAPTER X.

1. The Overthrow and Death of Saul. 1–7.
2. The Burial of Saul and his Sons. 8–12.
3. The Cause of Saul's Failure. 13–14.

1 Samuel xxi contains the same record of Saul's miserable end and trial. The writer of Chronicles uses the departure of Saul to introduce the history of the King after God's own heart, why God had dealt with Saul in judgment, and that the Kingdom was turned unto David, the Son of Jesse. The fatal battle between the Philistines and Israel took place in Mount Gilboa. Gilboa is south-east of the plain of Esdrachon which runs from Carmel to the Jordan valley. The cause of this war is unknown. Saul suffered a great defeat and many were the slain of Israel which fell in Gilboa. Among them were Saul's three sons, Jonathan, Abinadab (also called Ishui (1 Sam. xiv:49) and Melchi-shua. Then Saul himself was hit by an archer and wounded. Fearing abuse and insults from the Philistines, he requested his armor bearer to draw his sword and to kill him, but he was afraid, because Saul was the Lord's anointed. Then the unhappy King took his own sword and fell upon it. The armor bearer also committed suicide. The reader will find in annotations on 2 Sam. chapter i the story of the Amalekite explained.

The victory of the Philistines was complete. The people forsook their cities and these were occupied by the Philistines. When the plunderers came searching for the slain, in order to strip them of their belongings, the bodies of Saul and his sons were found. Then the body of Saul was stripped and beheaded and the armor was brought in the house of their gods* and the gory head fastened as a trophy in the house of Dagon. 1 Sam. xxxi:10 tells us that the

*Ashtaroth, the Phoenician Venus (1 Sam. xxxi:10).

body was fastened to the wall of Beth-shan, but here we read that only the head was fastened in the house of Dagon. Beth-shan was a mountain fortress, and here the bodies of Saul and his unfortunate sons were fastened.

"And now night with her dark mantle once more covered these horrible trophies. Shall the eagles and vultures complete the work which, no doubt, they had already begun? The tidings had been carried across the Jordan, and wakened echoes in one of Israel's cities. It was to Jabesh-gilead that Saul, when only named but not yet acknowledged king, had by a forced night-march brought help, delivering it from utter destruction (1 Sam. xi). That had been the morning of Saul's life, bright and promising as none other; his first glorious victory, which had made him king by acclamation, and drawn Israel's thousands to that gathering in Gilgal, when, amidst the jubilee of an exultant people, the new kingdom was inaugurated. And now it was night; and the headless bodies of Saul and his sons, deserted by all, swung in the wind on the walls of Beth-shan, amid the hoarse music of vultures and jackals.

"But it must not be so; it cannot be so. There was still truth, gratitude, and courage in Israel. And the brave men of Jabesh-gilead marched all the weary night; they crossed Jordan; they climbed that steep brow, and silently detached the dead bodies from the walls. Reverently they bore them across the river, and ere the morning light were far out of reach of the Philistines. Though it had always been the custom in Israel to bury the dead, they would not do so to these mangled remains, that they might not, as it were, perpetuate their disgrace. They burned them just sufficiently to destroy all traces of insult, and the bones they reverently laid under their great tamarisk tree, themselves fasting for seven days in token of public mourning. All honor to the brave men of Jabesh-gilead, whose deed Holy Scripture has preserved to all generations!"*

Sad and solemn is the final record of King Saul in these historical books. "So Saul died for his transgression

*Bible History.

which he committed against the Lord, even against the Word of the Lord, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it" (1 Sam. xxviii:6–7). He had disobeyed God, rejected His Word and then turned to the agency of Satan, to a demon instrument for help and advice. This is the road of apostasy. The road of the apostasy in Christendom so prominent in the closing days of our age is the same. It is departure from the faith and giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons (1 Tim. iv:1). It is a turning away from the truth, the Word of God, and turning to fables (2 Tim.iv:4).

III. The Crowning of David and the Establishment of His Kingdom

Chapters xi–xxi

1. David at Hebron.

CHAPTER XI

1. David Crowned King. 1–3.
2. Jerusalem becomes David's Capital. 4–9.
3. The Record of David's Mighty Men. 10–47.

From the Second book of Samuel we learned that the crowning of David in Hebron occurred after the death of Ishbosheth (2 Sam. v). The previous reign of David for seven and a half years and his failures are here omitted. We shall find that Chronicles does not record all the failures and sins of David and Solomon. The blessing and the grace of God toward the house of David are made prominent throughout. Acknowledged by all Israel as belonging to them, a great leader, Jehovah's choice to feed His people Israel and to be their prince, all the elders came to Hebron before the Lord and anointed David King.

The conquest of Jerusalem (Jebus) followed. It was still in the hands of the Jebusites, but David took the stronghold of Zion. Joab distinguished himself and became chief. This is unmentioned in 2 Sam. v. He built the city from Millo. Millo means "filling up" so that it may have been a big embankment which connected the city of David with the Temple mount. See 1 Kings ix:15 and 2 Chron. xxxii:5.

The record of David's mighty men are mentioned here in the beginning of his reign. In Second Samuel we read of them at the end (2 Sam. xxiii:8–39), preceding Solomon's reign. When the true King begins His reign, typified by both David and Solomon, those who were loyal to the Lord and faithful to Him will be remembered. The first name mentioned is Jashobeam, a Hachmonite. In Samuel his name is given as Josheb-basshebeth, the Tachmonite. They

were probably alternative names for the same person. Jashobeam means "the people shall return" and his other name in Samuel means "one who sits in a seat." Hachmonite means translated "the wise." According to Samuel he slew 800 and here in Chronicles he slew 300 at one time. Probably these are both correct; he slew 800 at one occassion and 300 at another. The second name is Eleazar ("help of God") the son of Dodo ("his Beloved"). His deed is more fully given in 2 Sam. xxiii:9. Shammah, the third one of the three mighties is omitted here (2 Sam. xxiii:11) .

Bethlehem shows the deepest devotion to David from the three who broke through the line in response to David's wish. It was not a command but only a desire expressed, yet they were ready to give their lives, for they were ambitious to please David. May we think here of Him who is greater than David. He, who sat on Sychar's well said to the woman "give me to drink." He longs for the refreshment from His own and we must be ambitious to please Him. It means to break through the hostile ranks of our enemies, as the three men did.

Abishai ("father of gift") the younger brother of Joab and nephew of David slew 300 men. Benaiah's deeds include the slaying of an Egyptian giant almost eight feet tall. In the list of the mighty men Uriah, the Hittite (verse 41) is included. He was a brave and devoted warrior which makes David's deed so much more abhorrent (2 Sam. xi).

2. David's Warriors and Friends

CHAPTER XII

1. The Benjamite Warriors with David at Ziklag. 1–7.
2. The Other Warriors. 8–22.
3. Those who Came to make him King. 23–40.

And now those are given by name who stood by David, when he was an outcast, rejected and persecuted by Saul. They were mighty men, his helpers in war. The leading company were of Benjamin, the tribe to which Saul belonged. These joined him when he was at Ziklag. In

the wilderness of Judah certain of the Gadites separated themselves unto him, "whose faces were like the faces of lions and they were as swift as the roes upon the mountains." May we remember again that all this is written for our learning. Our Lord is rejected and we can stand by Him, as these mighty men stood by David. Men with faces like lions, bold and courageous, are needed, as well as those as swift as the roes upon the mountains, in doing His bidding in true service. They braved the floods of Jordan and swept all hindrances out of the way to reach David, and when David spoke to them to ascertain why they had come, the Spirit of God sent through Amasai a message which must have greatly cheered his heart. "Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse." May we say to Him whose we are and whom we serve, "Thine we are, O Lord, and on thy side, thou Son of God." Other valiant men of Manasseh also joined him and helped him greatly.

Then a wonderful gathering took place. From everywhere they gathered to make David King. Even from the most northern parts of the land, from Issachar, Zebulun and Naphtali they came for one of the greatest events which happened in Israel's history. If we tabulate the figures given in verses 23–37 we have the following results:

Of Judah	6,800 men	
" Simeon	7,100 "	
" Levi	4,600 "	
With Jehoiada, the "prince" (not high-priest of Aaron)	3,700 "	
Zadok and his father's house	———	... 22 chiefs.
Of Benjamin	3,000 "	
" Ephraim	20,800 "	
" half Manasseh	18,000 "	
" Issachar	———	... 200 leaders.
" Zebulon	50,000 "	
" Naphtali	37,000 "	...1,000 chiefs.
" Dan	28,600 "	
" Asher	40,000 "	
" the 2½ tribes east of Jordan	120,000 "	
Total	339,600 men	...1,222 chiefs, etc.

This immense company of people came and they had all one desire and one thought, "to make David king." They were not of a double heart. There was no dissenting voice; they were of one heart, they came with a perfect heart to make David king.

A great feast was kept. They brought bread on asses and on camels and on mules and on oxen, and meat, meal, cakes of figs, and bunches of raisins, and wine and oil and oxen and sheep abundantly. There was joy in Israel. But how much greater will be the joy, and what a feast will be made, when He is made King, not alone over Israel, but when He will be enthroned as King of kings and Lord of lords!

3. The Ark Removed from Kirjath-jearim

CHAPTER XIII

1. The Consultation about the Ark. 1–5.
2. The Attempt and the Failure. 6–14.

The first thing after the coronation, which concerned David, was the Ark. This reveals the fact that the king had the things of the Lord upon his heart. He at once consulted with the captains about bringing the ark from Kirjath-jearim. The ark is mentioned forty-six times in the two Books of Chronicles* In Chronicles David's gracious words are recorded, which he addressed to the assembly of Israel, "If it seem good unto you and that it be of the Lord our God . . . let us bring again the ark of our Lord to us; for we inquired not at it in the days of Saul." The whole scene manifests a true religious enthusiasm and deep concern to follow the ways of Jehovah. David and all Israel went up to Kirjath-jearim and carried the ark upon a new cart. David and all Israel played before God with all their might, even with songs and with harps and with psalteries, with

*The titles are the following: Ark, 15 times; the Ark of God, 12 times; the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, 11 times; the Ark of the Lord, 4 times; the Ark of the Covenant of God, of Thy Strength, of our God and thy holy Ark, each once.

cymbals and trumpets. But in all this great and human rejoicing, David did not conform to Jehovah's ways. According to God's laws covering the handling of the ark, only the Levites were to touch it. They were to carry it on their shoulders and not to place it in a cart (Num. iv:5, 15). All this had been violated. The divine displeasure was fully manifested when Uzza put forth his hands to hold the ark, because the oxen had stumbled. Uzza was stricken with sudden death. He forgot that the ark was the emblem of Jehovah's presence in the midst of His people. See annotations on 2 Sam. vi.

4. David's Increase and Blessing

CHAPTER XIV.

1. Hiram. 1–2.
2. David's Family. 3–7.
3. The Philistines Defeated. 8–17.

The reader is referred to 2 Sam. v:11–16 for the comment on verses 1–7. Beeliada is called in 2 Sam. v:16 Eliada. Beeliada was probably changed to Eliada. David's great victory over the Philistines is also recorded in 2 Sam. v:17–25. He inquired of God and being permitted to go, he smote them at Baal-perazim, where also the idol images were burned with fire.* It was a great victory. Baal-perazim means "possessor of breaches." In the Prophet Isaiah the victory over the Philistines is used as a prophecy of the coming future judgment of the earth. "For the Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim, He shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that He may do His work, His strange work, and bring to pass His act, His strange act" (Isa. xxviii:21). A second time the Philistines came, and David, obedient to the divine instructions, gained another great victory. His fame went into all lands and the fear of him was brought by the Lord upon all nations.

*In obedience to Deut. vii:5, 25.

5. The Ark Brought to Jerusalem

CHAPTER XV–XVI:3

1. The True Preparation to Fetch the Ark. 1–15.
2. The Great Procession. 16–24.
3. The Ark Brought Back. 25–XVI:3.

The ark rested in the house of Obed-edom for three months. During that time David prepared a place for the ark of God and pitched a tent. Warned by what had happened, his conscience aroused, David said, "None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites, for them hath the Lord chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto Him forever."* All Israel and especially the Levites were gathered together. All is now done according to the divine directions. The former failure was owned and the priests and Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark. They carried the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves as God had commanded.

A great procession was also requested by David and arranged by the Levites. David loved singing and music as the expression of praise unto the Lord. The instruments mentioned are the psaltery, which was like a long box with a convex sounding board, over which wire strings were stretched; the harp and the cymbal. The latter was a brass instrument with a ball attached. The great procession was headed by a choir of singers and musicians under the leadership of Heman, Asaph and Ethan. In the middle of the procession was the ark, preceded by Chenaniah ("established by the Lord"), the chief of the Levites. Then

*"It is to be observed, that, although the death of Uzza had its origin in the guilty forgetfulness of David, it nevertheless gave occasion through grace to his being set in his true position for the regulation and appointment of all that concerned the Levites' service. It is always thus with regard to faith, for the purposes of God are fulfilled in favor of it. Man in his zeal may depart from the will of God, and God will chasten him, but only to bring him into more honor, by setting him more completely in the position which God has purposed, and in the understanding of His ways, according to which He will magnify His servant."—Synopsis.

there were the two door-keepers of the ark, Berechiah ("blessed of the Lord") and Elkanah ("God has purchased") and seven priests, who sounded the trumpets before the ark, and two more door-keepers. "Alamoth" in verse 20 must have been a choir of virgins (Alamoth means virgins). Such is the meaning of the word in the inscription of Psalm xlvi. In Psalm lxviii*, where a great procession is mentioned in connection with the removing of the ark (no doubt commemorating the return of the ark to Jerusalem) we read of women publishing the tidings (verse 11 marginal reading) and there we hear also of the damsels in the procession. "The singers went before; the players of the instruments followed after, among them were the damsels playing with timbrels" (verse 25). But the Sixty-eighth Psalm describes prophetically another great procession and celebration, when He comes in great power and glory. "Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord—to Him that rideth upon the heaven of heavens" (Psalm lxviii:32–33).

And so the ark was brought to Jerusalem and set in the midst of the tent. It was a time of great rejoicing and feasting. But what will it be when not an ark, the symbol only of the divine presence, is in the midst of the people, but when the once rejected King appears in the midst and receives the homage and praise of Israel!†

6. The Great Thanksgiving Psalm

CHAPTER XVI:4–43

1. David's Appointment. 4–6.
2. The Psalm of Praise and Thanksgiving. 7–36.
3. The Levites and the Public Worship. 37–43.

A great thanksgiving Psalm was then delivered by David into the hand of Asaph and his brethren. The view of mod-

*Read also Psalm cxxxii and notice its connection with the event of this chapter.

†Comment on Michal and her mockery is made in the parallel passage in 2 Samuel. We omit in annotation in Chronicles all which has been previously mentioned in Samuel and Kings.

ern critics, that this Psalm is post-exilic, does not call for any refutation, for the text declares that David himself delivered the hymn to Asaph. The Psalm is made up of portions of different Psalms. See Psalm cv:1–15; xcvi:1–13; cvi: 47–48; cvii:1; cxxxvi. A careful study will show the far reaching meaning of this composite Psalm. It is a great Prophecy. It begins with the celebration and praise of what Jehovah has done. Israel is called to remember His covenant. It is not the covenant at Sinai, with its conditional promises, but the unconditional, the grace-covenant, made with Abraham, an everlasting covenant that his seed is to have the land. But prophetically the Psalm points to the time when "His judgments are in all the earth"; it is at that time when the covenant made with Abraham will be remembered. Such a time will come according to the prophetic Word. Verse 22, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm," speaks of Israel's preservation; for Israel is his anointed, a kingdom of kings and priests. The day must come when the covenant made with Abraham will be realized and when Israel shall possess the land, after their wanderings from nation to nation (verse 20). Then there will be a throne in Zion and a King shall reign in righteousness, even Christ (Psalm ii).

Then Psalm xcvi is quoted. It is a Psalm which looks forward to the kingdom on earth, when the nations acknowledge Jehovah and bow in His presence. The blessed age of glory, of which the Prophets have so much to say, the unreached goal of the glorious future of the earth, the millennium, is pictured in this Psalm.

"Fear before Him, all the earth
"The World is established, it cannot be moved,
"Let the heavens be glad,
"And let the earth rejoice.
"And let them say among the nations,
"The Lord reigneth."
"Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof,
"Let the fields rejoice and all there is therein;
"Then shall the trees of the wood sing out,
"At the Presence of the Lord,
"Because He cometh to judge the earth."

The Praise of Israel concludes the Thanksgiving Psalm. We repeat, it is prophetic. It looks onward to the time when the Lord will deliver His people, when the promises made to the fathers will all be fulfilled, when the nations of the earth will know the Lord and when He will reign over all. Such is Israel's future. When He has been merciful to His land and to His people, the nations will rejoice (Deut. xxxi:43).

At the close of this chapter we notice how King David regulates everything that was to be done before the ark.

"The placing of the Ark in the capital of Israel, thus making it 'the city of God,' was an event not only of deep national, but of such typical importance, that it is frequently referred to in the sacred songs of the sanctuary. No one will have any difficulty in recognizing Psalm xxiv as the hymn composed for this occasion. But other Psalms also refer to it, amongst which, without entering on details that may be profitably studied by each reader, we may mention Psalm xv, lxviii, lxxviii, and especially Psalm ci, as indicating, so to speak, the moral bearing of the nearness of God's ark upon the king and his kingdom."*

7. The Covenant and the Promise

CHAPTER XVII

1. David's Plan to build a House. 1–6.
2. The Covenant and the Promise. 7–15.
3. David's Praise and Prayer. 16–27.

After the Ark had found its resting place in a tent the king became deeply concerned about the building of a house. He contrasted his own house of cedars with the humble dwelling place of the ark of the covenant. The

*Faith, apprehending the counsels and the work of God, could see in the establishment of the ark in Zion, the progress of God's power and intervention towards the peaceful and glorious reign of the Son of David. The sure mercies of David were as bright to the eye of faith as the dawn of day, in that the ark of the covenant had been set up by David the king in the mountain which God had chosen for His everlasting rest.—Synopsis.

desire to build a house for the Lord was expressed to Nathan, who told David, without having consulted the Lord, "Do all that is in thine heart, for God is with thee." That night the message came to Nathan, "Go and tell David my servant, Thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not build me a house to dwell in, for I have not dwelt in a house since the day that I brought up Israel unto this day, but have gone from tent to tent, and from one tabernacle unto another. Wheresoever I have walked with all Israel, spake I a word to any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people, saying, Why have ye not built me a house of cedars?" What condescension and what identification with His people these words reveal!*

As we have already considered the great Davidic covenant and its meaning (2 Sam. vii) as well as David's worship and prayer, we refer the reader to the annotations of that chapter. Solomon, David's son, is first in view, but he is only a type of Christ, David's greater Son and David's Lord as well. In Christ alone, this great covenant-promise is to be fulfilled. It is still all future, for the Son of David, rejected of His own, does not sit and rule upon the throne of His father David. He has gone to heaven, occupying the throne of God, sitting at His right hand up to the time when His enemies will be made His footstool. Then, when He appears the second time, the angelic announcement will come true, "and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David."

And what words David spoke to Him, whose grace had

*When Israel was a slave, God became his Redeemer; when he dwelt in tents, God abode in one also; when in conflict, God presented Himself as captain of Jehovah's host; when settled in peace, God establishes Himself in the house of His glory. The interval was the probation of His people on earth. God abode in the tent, and even His ark is taken. He interposes in grace for deliverance.

Christ also, since we were born of woman, is born of a woman; since His people were under the law, He is born under the law; now that He will have a heavenly people, He is on high for us; when He comes in glory, we shall come with Him, and reign when He reigns, but in these last we are with Him.—Synopsis.

made such promises! Humility, faith and confidence answered grace.

8. David's Wars and Successful Reign

CHAPTER XVIII

1. War with the Philistines. 1.
2. War with Moab. 2.
3. War with Zobah. 3–4.
4. War with Damascus. 5–11.
5. Wars with Edom. 12–13.
6. David's Administration. 14–17.

After such glorious experiences David went forth as the victorious warrior-king to conquer the enemies of Israel. He first smote the Philistines, subdued them and took Gath and her towns. Gath, the chief city of the Philistines, is called in 2 Sam. viii:1 "Metheg-ammah," which means "the bridle of the mother city." Then he smote Moab and they became his servants and brought presents. Great are the conquests and victories of David recorded in this chapter. From Hadarezer, King of Zobah, he took 1,000 chariots, 7,000 horsemen and 20,000 footmen.* Then the Syrians came to help the King of Zobah and lost 22,000 men. Then the Syrians also became his servants and brought presents. "And the Lord gave victory to David whithersoever he went." In all this we see foreshadowed the triumphs of our Lord Jesus Christ, when He comes as the victorious King and His enemies shall all be subdued.

All the spoil taken, the shields of gold, were brought to Jerusalem. From Tibhath and from Chun, cities which belonged to Hadarezer, David took very much brass. The brazen sea, the pillars and the vessels of brass for the temple were made by Solomon out of this material. Silver and gold which he carried away from all the conquered nations was all dedicated unto the Lord. And in a future day shall the silver and the gold of the Gentiles be brought to Jeru-

*2 Sam. viii:4 has 700, which is a copyist's error.

salem (Isa. lx:6, 17; Psalm lxxii:10). So David reigned over all Israel, and executed judgment and justice among all his people.

9. The Wars with Ammon, Syria and the Philistines

Chapters xix–xx

CHAPTER XIX.

1. Hanun's Insult to David's Servants. 1–5.
2. Joab's Victory. 6–16.
3. David's Victorious Campaign. 17–19.

See annotations on 2 Sam. Chapter x. The occasion of the war with the Ammonites was the insult to the messengers of David whom he had sent to the son of King Nahash. Nahash had died and David sent the messengers to comfort Hanun concerning his father. It gives a little glimpse of the tenderness of David. "But the princes of the children of Ammon said to Hanun, Thinkest thou that David doth honor thy father, that he hath sent comforters unto thee? Are not his servants come unto thee for to search and to overthrow and to spy out the land?"* When the Ammonites realized the insult to David's messengers, they spent 1,000 talents of silver (about $375,000) to hire chariots and horsemen. Joab was victorious. Then the king himself took charge and gathered all Israel. A great victory was the result.

In 2 Samuel the great sin of David follows the victory over the Syrians. In our comment on the fall of David, we have pointed out the connection between the victory of David and his sin. David's fall is omitted in Chronicles because the grace of God is the prominent feature and grace had completely covered David's great sin.

*"When grace is despised by those to whom it is manifested, the king's judgment follows. Opposition and rebellion only serve to establish his authority in the very place where resistance is attempted. It is useless to strive against the power of God's chosen king."

Joab and David take Rabbah

CHAPTER XX

1. Rabbah Destroyed. 1–3.
2. The Philistine Giants Slain. 4–8.

Rabbah was the capital of Ammon (Deut. iii:11; Josh. xiii:25) and was taken by Joab. David tarried in Jerusalem (so fatal to him, 2 Sam. xi:1) and Joab smote Rabbah and destroyed it. Then David appeared also upon the scene. Joab had summoned David to help in the overthrow of the city (2 Sam. xii:27, etc.). The crown mentioned was probably the crown of Milcom, their idol-king. It was of solid gold set with precious stones. David received the crown and precious stones, even as our Lord Jesus receives the glory and will appear crowned with many crowns (Rev. xix:12). On verse 3 see annotations 2 Sam. xii:31. The overthrow of the giants followed. First Sibbechai slew Sippai of the children of the giants; in 2 Sam. xxi his name is given as Saph. Elhanan slew Lahmi of Goliath.* Then David's nephew Jonathan, the son of Shimea, David's brother, slew the last of the giants. He had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot and was of great stature. These giants were the special instruments of the power of darkness. They have a typical significance.

"The notion of a giant in Scripture is always connected with evil, the lifting up of man against God, the symbol of pride and self-sufficiency, as well as of oppressive power. He is the opposite of the little and the lowly, the humble in heart, with whom God delights to dwell; but thus may stand for the tyranny of a lust, as in the case of Og, or of a Satanic delusion, as with Goliath himself. In those before us we must see, what we have seen in their kinsman, the monstrous delusions which abide in a system of error such as Philistinism depicts, the ecclesiastical "mystery of lawlessness" of Christian times."†

*The words "the brother of" are in italics and must be omitted. It was another giant who had the same name as the giant of 1 Sam. xvii.

†Numerical Bible.

And in the last one overcome by Jonathan ("gift of the Lord"), we see a type of the final ecclesiastical leader of the apostasy, the man of sin. The number "six" points to this (Rev. xiii:11–18).

10. The Numbering of the People and the Punishment

CHAPTER XXI

1. David's Failure in Numbering the People. 1–7.
2. David's Confession and the Message of God. 8–12.
3. David's Answer and the Punishment. 13–17.
4. The Altar in the Threshing Floor of Ornan. 18–30.

On the alleged discrepancy between the statement in 2 Sam. xxiv:1 "And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and He moved (literal: 'He suffered him to be moved) David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah," and 1 Chron. xxi:1 "And Satan stood up against Israel and provoked David to number Israel," see pages 232 and 233 on 2 Sam. xxiv. Israel had committed some sin and deserved punishment. This is clear from the statement in 2 Sam. xxiv:1. The direct cause of the visitation, however, was David's pride, and may have been connected with the desire of constituting his kingdom as a great military power. He wanted to know the strength of the nation and glory in it, and the king forgot that the Lord had increased Israel and all he was and had was of God. What a difference between David here and David sitting in the presence of the Lord after hearing Nathan's message! (xvii:16). Nothing humbles so as being in the presence of the Lord. The lust of the flesh in self-indulgence had led to his awful sin with Bathsheba, and now the lust of the eyes and the pride of life had entangled him. Satan stood behind it all and the sin committed, pride and self-exaltation, was according to Satan's character. Then David confessed (verse 8) and the Lord sent the prophet Gad to him announcing the modes of punishment from which he was to make his choice. The recovery of David, his real knowledge of God and the working of His grace

in his heart are manifested by the fact that he committed himself to God, choosing rather to fall into the hands of God than into the hands of his enemies. The Lord sent the pestilence. David saw the angel of the Lord. Then David and the elders clothed in sack cloth were on their faces. At the sight of the angel with his drawn sword stretched over Jerusalem, David confessed again, but his prayer becomes an intercession; he takes the sin upon himself and prays "let thine hand, be on me, and on my father's house; but not on thy people that they should be plagued." This prayer was speedily followed by mercy. The site of the future house of the Lord was then acquired (see comment on 2 Sam. xxiv). Ornan and his four sons had also seen the angel and they were afraid (verse 20). And the Jebusite was willing to give the threshing-floor and all within it. And when the site had been acquired by purchase and the altar was built, burnt-offerings and peace-offerings were brought. Heaven answered by fire. "And the Lord commanded the angel; and he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof." All is blessedly typical of Him who is the true burnt-offering, as well as the peace-offering.*

*"It is interesting to see the order unfolded here in the establishment of the relations of sovereign grace: first of all, the heart of God and His sovereign grace in election, suspending the execution of the deserved and pronounced judgment (verse 15); next, the revelation of this judgment, a revelation which produces humiliation before God and a full confession of sin before His face. David, and the elders of Israel, clothed in sackcloth, fall upon their faces, and David presents himself as the guilty one. Then, instruction comes from God, as to that which must be done to cause the pestilence judicially and definitively to cease, namely, the sacrifice in Ornan's threshing-floor. God accepts the sacrifice, sending fire to consume it, and then He commands the angel to sheathe his sword. And sovereign grace, thus carried out in righteousness through sacrifice, becomes the means of Israel's approach to their God, and establishes the place of their access to Him."

IV. Preparations for the Building of the Temple

Chapter xxii–xxix.

1. The Preparations and Charge to Solomon

CHAPTER XXII

1. The Material. 1–5.
2. The Charge to Solomon. 6–16.
3. The Charge to the Princes. 17–19.

God had accepted the sacrifice. The judgment had passed. Prayer had been answered and David, therefore, could truthfully say "this is the house of the Lord God, and this is the altar of the burnt-offering for Israel." The place had therefore been pointed out on which the Temple was to be reared. And from now on up to the twenty-eighth verse of Chapter xxvi all concerns the house which is to be built. The Temple is from now on prominently in the foreground and that which the book of Kings does not mention, David's great interest in making preparations for it, is recorded in these chapters. And so we see David with great energy making vast preparations. It shows again how grace had worked in his heart. All else seems to have been forgotten by him. Only one desire controls the king, to make provision of everything necessary for the construction of the Temple. And the house, according to David's conception "must be exceeding magnificient, of fame and of glory throughout all countries." His heart burned with zeal to glorify Jehovah, whose mercy and grace he knew so well and who had kept and prospered him in all his ways. "I will therefore now make preparation for it," David said. Then he prepared abundantly before his death. David, making preparation for the temple his son was to put up, is not without a very striking typical mean-

ing. Both David and Solomon are types of our Lord Jesus Christ. David typifies Him is His humiliation and suffering, Solomon in His exaltation and Glory. What Christ has done in His Grace results in the coming Glory. This is foreshadowed in the preparations David made for the house and the glorious reign of his son. If this is kept in mind these historical statements will take on a blessed meaning.

He gathered the strangers (the descendants of the Canaanites) and he set them at work. Stones, iron and timber all were prepared before hand on a large scale. Then he called for Solomon, young and tender in years, and addressed him. First he restated the reason why he had been barred from building the house. Then he recited the promise made to him that his son should have rest and build a house for His name. "For his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days. He shall build a house for my name." David believed all the Lord had spoken through Nathan, and, believing the promise, he had made all preparations and was telling his son about it.

Then he exhorted him to build the house, to keep the law of the Lord and to take heed. "Be strong, and of good courage and dread not nor be dismayed." Once more he speaks of all he had done in preparation of the house of the Lord. Even in the days of trouble and adversity he had prepared for the house and remembered the claims of Jehovah. Immense amounts of gold and silver, the spoils of wars, had been stored up by him. Many millions of dollars in gold and silver were in his possession and devoted for the one object. And Solomon was to add unto it. Then he told him to arise and to be doing. In the same way he commanded the princes of Israel to help his son Solomon.

May this teach us who know the riches of the Grace of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, to be as devoted to Him, as zealous to glorify Him, as David was in making these preparations for the building of the Temple.

2. The Numbering and Arrangement of the Levites

CHAPTER XXIII

1. Solomon Made King. 1.
2. The Number of the Levites. 2–6.
3. The Gershonites. 7–11.
4. The Sons of Kohath. 12–20.
5. The Sons of Merari. 21–23.
6. The Service of the Levites. 24–32.

David, in his seventieth year, made Solomon king. It is the first time, and afterwards (xxix:22) he was made king the second time.

"The first time Solomon was made king, when grace was fully established in the altar built on the threshing-floor of Ornan, where the son of David, as the prince of peace, was to build the temple. Solomon is introduced as the head of all that was being established, and as holding the first and supreme place in the mind of God—the one on whom all the rest depended, which could not even exist now without him. The house, the whole order of the house, and its government, all referred to Solomon; and thus his identification with David, in that both were on the throne at the same time, makes it much easier to understand the type of Christ in this. It is *one* person, whom His sufferings and victories place on the throne of glory and of peace. For at this moment, although the result of the glory was not yet manifested, God had given rest unto His people, that they might dwell at Jerusalem."*

After he had made Solomon king, David devoted himself still more to the house of the Lord. He ordered and arranged everything. So when the Temple was built, Solomon had only to carry out the plans his father in divine wisdom had made. All is typical of Him who has ordered all things in His infinite grace.

The census of the Levites gave their number from thirty years and upwards, at 38,000. Of these 24,000 were appointed to attend, set forward the work of the house of the

*Synopsis.

Lord; 6,000 were officers and judges; 4,000 were porters and 4,000 praised the Lord with the instruments David had made to praise therewith (see Amos vi:5).

3. The Twenty-four Courses of the Priests

CHAPTER XXIV

1. The Twenty-four Courses. 1–19.
2. The Organization of Other Levites. 20–31.

In the previous chapter we read of 24,000 Levites set apart for the service. In the next chapter we find twenty-four leaders of song and music appointed, and here David instituted twenty-four Courses of Priests. Each of these ministered a full week, from one Sabbath to the next. These courses were not only continued by Solomon, but also by Hezekiah and Josiah. From Luke i:5, we learn the same order was still followed in the days our Lord was born. Zecharias belonged to the eighth course, that of Abijah.

In the book of Revelation (Chap. iv, etc.), we read of twenty-four elders clothed in white raiment, crowned and seated upon twenty-four thrones. They represent symbolically all the redeemed brought into glory. This number is obviously an allusion to the arrangement of the priesthood made by David for the service of the Temple under the glorious reign of Solomon, the blessed type of the reign of Christ in glory. As these twenty-four Courses of Priests were to minister during Solomon's glorious reign, they are typical of the redeemed, the holy and royal priesthood, associated with the Lord Jesus Christ when He occupies His throne of Glory.

4. The Singers and Musicians of the Temple

CHAPTER XXV

1. Sons of Asaph, Jeduthun and Heman. 1–7.
2. Their Division by Lot into Twenty-four. 8–31.

As we have seen before, Asaph, Jeduthun (Ethan) and Heman were the master leaders in song and music; their

service was eminently spiritual, for we read "they should prophesy." Heman especially is called the king's seer in the words of God. This is a significant expression. How much there is in what is termed "worship", which has nothing whatever of the words of God in it. In most of the songs used in our times there is little of the words of God and many contain unscriptural and sentimental phrases. Israel's worship in song and music was to be spiritual, prophesying and in the words of God. Christian worship is not less. It is to be in Spirit and in Truth. "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. iii:16). Asaph had four sons, Jeduthun six, and Heman fourteen, equal to twenty-four. They were divided into twenty-four courses of twelve men each, equal to 288, who served a week in turn. The names of six of the sons of Heman form, in the Hebrew, a complete sentence. Giddalti, Romamti-ezer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir and Mahazioth (verse 4) may be rendered in English:

I have magnified and I have raised up help;
Sitting in trouble, I have spoken oracles plentiful.

This fact has aroused the suspicion of the critics regarding the genuineness of this entire list of names. "Now this sentence," saith a critic, "is either an obscure and ancient prayer which hath been mistaken for a list of names by the compiler, or else the compiler has purposely strung together those significant names in such order as to form a sentence."* But it is not the mistake of the compiler or an invention. We read that God gave to Heman these sons and the pious Israelite named his sons so as to produce this meaning. There are many such messages in names throughout the Bible. (See annotations on Genesis v).

*W. R. Harvey-Jellie.

5. The Porters and other Temple Officers

CHAPTER XXVI

1. The Porters. 1–12.
2. The Keepers of the Gates. 13–19.
3. The Levites over the Treasures. 20–28.
4. Officers and Judges. 29–32.

Ninety-three porters are mentioned, which held the position of chiefs. The whole number of porters was 4,000 (Chap. xxiii:5). Asaph in verse 1 must be changed to Ebiasaph (ix:19), for Asaph was not a Korahite, but a Gershonite. Obed-edom is especially mentioned. God blessed him (verse 5). He had sheltered the ark (xiii:14), "and the Lord blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that he had." And here the blessing is seen in a remarkable increase. "All these of the sons of Obed-edom; they and their sons and their brethren, able men for strength for the service, were three score and two of Obed-edom" (see Psalm cxxvii:3). How faithful the Lord is. He did not forget Obed-edom's service and rewarded him richly.

Then there were the gate keepers. The Temple was still unbuilt, no plans had been drawn by man, but the Lord had revealed the plan to David (xxviii:11–13), and he ordered the keepers of the gates according to the divine plan. Then follows the appointment of the Levites who had charge over the treasures and the appointment of officers and judges. Their number was 6,000 (Chap. xxiii:4). They were divided into three classes: 1. For the outward business of Israel (verse 29). 2. Those who had the oversight of Israel beyond Jordan westward, 1,700 persons, for all the business of the Lord, and for service of the King (verse 30). 3. The third class consisted of 2,700 who were rulers for every matter pertaining to God, and affairs of the king (verses 31–32). All was divinely planned and arranged through David in anticipation of the glorious reign of his son. And even so all is planned and appointed for the coming reign of the King of righeousness and the King of Peace.

6. The Captains, Princes and Various Officials

CHAPTER XXVII

1. The Twelve Captains. 1–15.
2. The Princes of the Twelve Tribes. 16–22.
3. The Unfinished Numbering. 23–24.
4. Various Officers. 25–34.

We have here the military organization of David's kingdom. The army comprised all males over twenty years of age. The host had twelve divisions each of 24,000. It is remarkable how the number twenty-four occurs again and again. Twelve is the governmental number and twice twelve, that is, twenty-four, would indicate a perfect and complete government such as will be established when Heaven's King of Glory is enthroned. In the list of the Princes of Israel the tribe of Dan is numbered last. There is something significant about this. Dan, as we have seen, is not mentioned in the chronological register, nor is this tribe mentioned in Rev. vii. Dan is called a serpent (Gen. xlix:17); it may be that the coming false Messiah will come out of Dan. Gad and Asher are not mentioned in the list.

7. The Last Acts of David and His Death

Chapters xxviii–xxix

The Great Assembly

CHAPTER XXVIII

1. The Address of David to the Assembly. 1–10.
2. The Patterns, the Gold and the Silver Delivered to Solomon. 11–19.
3. His Encouraging Words to Solomon.

The events in this chapter connect with Chapter xxiii:1. There we find the brief statement that David was old and full of years and that Solomon his son was made king over Israel. Then follow the chapters which acquaint us with the preparations David had made for the building of the

Temple and the arrangements of the Levites, etc., for the Temple service. And now the threads of the narrative which were dropped are taken up again. A great and representative audience was called by David when he made Solomon king. All the princes of Israel and the captains and mighty men in Jerusalem came together. As we know from the book of Kings the aged monarch was weak in his body. But when the hour came to address the great assembly he arose and stood upon his feet. The three attitudes of David are suggestive. He was, on his face, a penitent, (2 Sam. i:12, 16; 1 Chron. xxi:16); he sat in His presence as a worshipper (1 Chron. xvii:16), and how he stood on his feet as a servant. The words he spoke before the assembly are similar to those he addressed to his son Solomon in private (Chap. xxii). After he had spoken all these words, in which he once more traced the gracious dealings of the Lord with him, he admonished his son to know the God of his father, to serve Him with a perfect heart and a willing mind. "If thou seek Him, He will be found of thee; but if thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off forever." Then he exhorted him again to build the house. "Be strong and do it."

After this David handed over the patterns of the porch, the temple houses, the treasuries, the upper chambers and the inner rooms and of the place of the mercy seat. How did the king obtain these patterns ? He had them by the Spirit. The authorized version prints Spirit with a small "s." It was not his own spirit who planned it. A certain commentator says it means that these patterns had been "floating in his mind." The sentence "the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit" means that the Holy Spirit had revealed it all to him. It was given to him by inspiration as the pattern of the tabernacle and all belonging to it had been given to Moses also by revelation. Then he turned over to Solomon the immense quantities of gold and silver and other materials he had so faithfully collected for the construction of the Temple.

The Final Words and Actions of David. His Death.

CHAPTER XXIX.

1. The Exhortation. 1–5.
2. The Response. 6–9.
3. David's Praise and Prayer. 10–20.
4. The Sacrifices and Enthronement of Solomon. 21–25.
5. The Reign of David. His Death. 26–30.

Then David spoke once more to the assembled princes and captains. What tenderness and concern as well as devotion his words reveal! "Solomon my son, whom alone God hath chosen, is yet young, and tender, and the work is great, for the palace is not for man, but for the Lord God." Once more the aged king speaks of the vast preparations he had made for the house of God. He would also contribute largely from his own treasures. The gold and silver, precious and glistening stones amounted in value to many million dollars. The gold of Ophir mentioned was the purest and finest known in that day (Job xxii:24; xxviii:16; Isaiah xiii:12). And all he had done was because he had set his affection to the house of my God. He loved it so much and therefore he gave and consecrated such vast treasures. And here we may remember Him who was richer than David, who gave more than David ever could give. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor that ye through His poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. viii:9). After he had told of his own devotion he said, "And who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?" The Hebrew is "to fill his hand to-day to Jehovah." It means that whosoever gave willingly, as he himself had done, would fill his hand with a free will offering unto the Lord. Christian giving should always be looked upon in this light. It is giving unto the Lord. And David's great liberality and example brought a great response. An immense offering was given.*

*"Drams" is in Hebrew "Daric", a Persian gold coin weighing about 130 grains. The word is found also in Ezra viii:27. It was probably called "daric" after Darius and therefore shows that Chronicles was written after the captivity.

"Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the Lord, and David the King also rejoiced with great joy." The joy of giving took hold of all. "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts xx:35). How great must have been the joy of the King as he beheld the fruits of his own devotion in the willingness of His people! And here again we must think once more of our Lord. It is His gracious example in giving Himself for us, His people, which will lead us on to sacrifice, to give, to spend and be spent. And how great His joy if His people follow thus after Him.

It is a great inspired outburst of David which follows. How He praises! Verses 10–13 is one of the greatest outbursts of praise and worship found in the Old Testament. Then what humility! "But who am I, and what is my people that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee . . . all this store that we have prepared to build thee a house for thine holy name cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own." A most beautiful sight is an aged Saint whom God hath used and honored and who is humble. Alas! how many become lifted up and walk in pride. Then David prayed for the people and for his son Solomon. "And all the congregation blessed the Lord God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshipped the Lord, and the King" (verse 20). All foreshadows that day of which we read in Psalm cx:3, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." That will be when the King, the Prince of Peace, will take His glorious throne, when He begins to rule.

After the large number of sacrifices had been brought and they had eaten before the Lord on that day with great gladness, Solomon was made king the second time, even as his father David passed through the same experience. This double event has no doubt a definite typical meaning in connection with our Lord in as much as both, David and Solomon, are types of the Lord Jesus Christ. When Solomon

was made king the first time he was but anointed with oil (1 Kings i:39) and acclaimed as king, but he did not occupy the kingly throne. But when he was made king the second time he sat upon the throne "and all *Israel* obeyed him." "The Lord magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel and bestowed upon him such royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel." We see therefore (though no commentaries mention it) that these two occasions are typical of the first and the second coming of our Lord. Our Lord was anointed king when He came the first time, but He received not the throne. When He comes the second time He receives the throne and God will bestow upon Him "royal majesty" and "all Israel" will obey Him.

Then follows the record of the reign and death of David. There is no clash between the account of David's last days in the closing chapters of the Second Book of Samuel and the opening chapters of First Kings. The record in Chronicles is in fullest keeping with the purpose and object of this book. Blessing and grace is manifested to the end, and David's failings are passed over.

Appendix.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE,

ACCORDING TO PROFESSOR KEIL, FROM THE EXODUS TO THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE BY SOLOMON.

(Comp. Judges xi:26 and 1 Kings vi:1.)

PRINCIPAL EVENTS.		Years of their duration.	Date before Christ.
The Exodus		..	.. 1492
Giving of the Law on Mount Sinai		..	from 1492 to 1491
Death of Moses and Aaron		in the 40th year	.. 1453
Conquest of Canaan by Joshua		7	1452 " 1445
Division of Canaan to the invasion of Chushan Rishathaim		10	1445 " 1435
Death of Joshua		..	about 1442
Wars of Israel against the Canaanites		..	from 1442
Expedition against Benjamin (Judges xx.)		..	about 1436
Oppression by Chushan Rishathaim		8	1435 to 1427
Othniel, and rest of Israel		40	1427 " 1387
Oppression by the Moabites		18	1387 " 1369
Ehud, and rest of Israel		80	1369 " 1289
Victory of Shamgar over the Philistines		..	.. ..
Oppression by Jabin		20	1289 " 1269
Deborah and Barak, and rest of Israel		40	1269 " 1229
Oppression by yhe Midianites		7	1229 " 1222
Gideon, and rest		40	1222 " 1182
Abimelech		3	1182 " 1179
Tola		23	1179 " 1156
Jair		22	1156 " 1134
Eli for forty years		..	1154 " 1114
Then: *In the East.*	*In the West.*		
Oppression by the Ammonites, 18 years: 1134–1116	By the Philistines	40	1134 " 1094
	Loss of the Ark	..	about 1114
Jephthah, 6 years: 1116–1110	Samson's deeds	..	1116 to 1096
	Samuel as a prophet	..	from 1114
Ibzan, 7 years: 1110–1103	Samuel judge	19	1094 to 1075
Elon 10 years: 1103–1093	Saul king	20	1075 " 1055
Abdon, 8 years: 1093–1085	David at Hebron	7	1055 " 1048
	David at Jerusalem	33	1048 " 1015
	Solomon to the building of Temple	3	1015 " 1012
	Total	480 years.	

SECOND CHRONICLES

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The Division of the Second Book of Chronicles

Originally the two books of Chronicles formed one book and were undivided. The period of the history of the people, Israel, covered in this book is the same as in the books of Kings. It begins with the Solomonic reign, the building and dedication of the Temple, and ends with the captivity of Judah. The closing of Chronicles proves the post-exilic time of its composition, for it mentions Cyrus the King of Persia and his restoration proclamation. The history, however, is almost exclusively the history of the house of Judah. Israel's history is very briefly touched upon. Inasmuch as Chronicles is written from the priestly and the divine viewpoint, everything centers around the Temple of Jehovah. There are most interesting descriptions of Solomon's reign, the Temple and the Worship, which we do not find in the parallel chapters in the first book of Kings. The reader should make use of the parallel passages given in connection with the introduction to the Chronicles on page 372, and then read the annotations in Kings, as we shall not repeat, in the annotations of this second book of Chronicles, what has already been given. We shall point out what is peculiar to Chronicles. We divide the book into four sections.

I. THE REIGN OF SOLOMON. Chapters i–ix.

1. The Beginning of His Reign and the First Vision. Chapter i.
2. The Building of the Temple. Chapters ii–iv.
3. The Dedication of the Temple. Chapters v–vii:10.
4. The Second Vision. Chapter vii:11–22.
5. Solomon's Prosperity and Activities. Chapter viii.
6. The Queen of Sheba. Solomon's Death. Chapter ix.

II. **THE REBELLION OF THE TEN TRIBES.** Chapter x.

III. **THE HISTORY OF THE KINGS OF JUDAH. EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE CAPTIVITY.** Chapters xi:10–xxxvi:14.

1. **Decline and Apostasy under Rehoboam and Abijah. Asa and his Reformation and Failure.** Chapters xi–xvi.
2. **Reformation under Jehoshaphat.** Chapters xvii–xx.
3. **Decline and Apostasy under Jehoram, Ahaziah and Athaliah.** Chapters xxi–xxii.
4. **Reformation under Joash, and Joash's Apostasy.** Chapters xxiii–xxiv.
5. **Decline and Apostasy under Amaziah, Uzziah, Jothan and Ahaz.** Chapters xxv–xxviii.
6. **Reformation under Hezekiah.** Chapters xxix–xxxii.
7. **Decline and Apostasy under Manasseh and Amon.** Chapter xxxiii.
8. **Reformation under Josiah.** Chapters xxxiv–xxxv.
9. **The Final Decline and Apostasy.** Chapter xxxvi:1–14.

IV. **THE CAPTIVITY AND THE EPILOGUE.** Chapter xxxvi:15–23.

Analysis and Annotations.

I. The Reign of Solomon.

Chapters i–ix.

1. The Beginning of Solomon's Reign and the First Vision.

CHAPTER I.

1. The Lord was with Him. 1.
2. At Gibeon. 2–6.
3. The First Vision. 7–12.
4. His Riches and Prosperity. 13–17.

The events connected with the beginning of Solomon's reign and recorded in 1 Kings i–iii:3 are omitted in Chronicles. Second Chronicles begins with the statement that Solomon was strengthened in his kingdom, and the Lord his God was with him, and magnified him exceedingly. This shows the keynote of Chronicles. It is Jehovah's gracious dealing with the house of David and the bestowal of the promised blessing. In 1 Kings iii:3 we read that Solomon loved the Lord.

Here more of Gibeon is mentioned than in Kings. "Gibeon was a great city, as one of the royal cities" (Joshua x:2). Later Gibeon became the possession of the tribe of Benjamin and was made a priest-city. It was about two hours from Jerusalem. When Saul had destroyed Nob, the tabernacle was removed to Gibeon, where it remained till Solomon built the house of the Lord (1 Chron. xvi:39, xxi:29; 1 Kings iii:4; 1 Chron. i:3). The ark had been brought from Kirjath-jearim, not far from Gibeon, to the tent which David had pitched for it in Jerusalem (2 Sam. vi:2; 1 Chron. xiii:5–6), with the tabernacle and the brasen altar, that Bezaleh, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made remained at Gibeon. The high place at Gibeon means the elevation upon which the tabernacle and the altar stood. Originally there was at the same spot a Canaanitish place for the worship of idols. As long as the temple, that central place for worship chosen by God (Deut. xii:11), was not standing,

the worship of Jehovah in the Gibeon high place was not sinful. After the temple was built the high places became centers of idolatrous practices. Solomon and all the congregation with him gathered at Gibeon and sought the brasen altar and offered a thousand burnt offerings upon it. He began with this act of worship and it was the same night that God appeared unto Solomon. The Lord drew graciously near to him as the result of the sacrifices upon the brasen altar. The burnt-offering is the type of the perfect devotion and sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, and it is this which makes us nigh. On the meaning of the great vision, God's offer to Solomon, the King's answer, see 1 Kings iii, pages 253 and 254.

After the vision and the Lord's promise, "I will give thee riches and wealth and honor," we hear of Solomon's horses, horsemen and chariots. In 1 Kings, we find the same paragraph in another setting, that is, in chapter x:26–29. He had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen and 4,000 stalls for horses. A great commerce seems to have been fostered by Solomon. While this showed the promise fulfilled, in that the Lord gave him riches and wealth, it also showed an unlawful desire for increase which was forbidden (see Deut. xvii:16). Read comment on 1 Kings x:26–29, page 270.

2. The Building of the Temple.

Chapters ii–iv.

The Beginning and Appeal to Huram.

CHAPTER II.

1. Solomon's Purpose. 1.
2. The Workmen. 2.
3. The Message to Huram, King of Tyre. 3–10.
4. Huram's Answer. 11–16.
5. Solomon Numbers the Strangers. 17–18.

In 1 Kings v, Solomon purposed to begin the great work to which he had been called, to build an house for the name of the Lord and an house for his kingdom (1 Kings vii:1; 2 Chron. viii:1). Then he levied a very large body of men from among the people to labor in cutting the timber and

hewing stone for the Temple and the palace of Solomon. Of these 70,000 were carriers; 80,000 were quarry men and 3,600 overseers. In 1 Kings v:13, we read of a levy of 30,000 men. These must be considered additional workmen, for they were sent to Lebanon.

Solomon then sent a message to Huram,* the King of Tyre. Hiram had sent before messages to Solomon, when he heard of his enthronement. They of Tyre had already brought cedar trees in abundance to David for the building of the Temple (1 Chron. xxii:4). He loved Solomon as much as he loved his father David, for when Hiram heard the words of Solomon he rejoiced greatly and said, "Blessed be the Lord this day, who hath given unto David a wise son over this great people." To him Solomon sent a message. He reminded him of the dealings his father David had with him, and requested "even so deal with me." He acquainted him with his work, "Behold I build an house for the name of the Lord my God," and that it would be a great house, "for great is our God above all gods." Then he requested that Hiram would send him a master-workman and more material, cedar trees, fir trees and algum† trees out of Lebanon. In return he offered to Hiram's servant wheat, barley, wine and oil, twenty thousand measures of each. 1 Kings v:11 tells us that besides this gift to the workers in timber, twenty thousand measures of wheat and oil were yearly given by Solomon to the household of Hiram.

And Huram's answer reveals that he was a believer in Jehovah, for he acknowledged Him as the Creator and as the lover of His people (verses 11–12). The King sent Huram, a skilful worker whose mother was a Jewess (1 Kings vii:14). This Gentile co-operation in the construction of the Temple is interesting, and also prophetic. Jews and Gentiles, Israel and the nations will yet unite to glorify the Lord. And the strangers who were in Israel, also Gentiles, were the servants of the King.

*The same as Hiram.

†Or almug trees (1 Kings x:11) the red sandalwood which was highly valued among the ancient nations.

The Building of the Temple.

CHAPTER III.

1. The Place. 1–2.
2. The Dimensions. 3.
3. The Porch and Holy Place. 4–7.
4. The Most Holy. 8–14.
5. The Brazen Pillars. 15–17.

First, the place is mentioned where the house of the Lord was built, "in Mount Moriah (Gen. xxii:2), where the Lord appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite." The building began in the second day of the second month in the fourth year of Solomon's reign. From 1 Kings vi:1 we learn that this was the 480th year from the Exodus. Counting forty years to one generation we have exactly twelve generations. This figure can be chronologically verified. The internal measurement given in verse 3 is sixty cubits long (about ninety feet), twenty cubits wide (about thirty feet), and thirty cubits high (about forty-five feet). Then there was the porch. The height of the porch is given as 120 cubits, which is evidently the error of a copyist; it should be twenty cubits, or perhaps thirty. For the full description see annotations on 1 Kings vi (pages 258–262). Notice again the description of the cherubim overlaid with gold. These are not the cherubim upon the ark, but they were great figures made by Solomon. Each was four cubits high. Their great wings met over the mercy seat upon which were the cherubim, which look down upon the mercy-seat. The Solomonic cherubim looked outwards. The word "inward" in verse 13 is a wrong translation. On the meaning of this attitude of these gigantic cherubim, see comment on 1 Kings vi:23–30 (page 262). In verse 14, the veil is mentioned, of which we read nothing in 1 Kings vi. This veil was woven of the same material and in the same manner as the one in the tabernacle (Exod. xxvi:31).

The two pillars called Jachin ("He will establish") and Boaz ("In Him is strength") are the symbols of the sta-

bility of the government of this earth in the glorious reign of Christ, which is typified by the reign of Solomon and the house he built.

The Vessels that were for the House.

CHAPTER IV.

1. The Altar of Brass. 1.
2. The Molten Sea. 2–5.
3. The Ten Loaves. 6.
4. The Ten Candlesticks. 7.
5. The Ten Tables. 8.
6. The Court. 9–10.
7. The Work of Huram. 11–17
8. The Work of Solomon. 18–22.

The altar of brass, twenty cubits long, twenty cubits broad and ten cubits high, is not mentioned in the book of Kings. In the south-east of the court of the temple, stood the molten sea, which rested upon twelve oxen, three looking northward, three looking westward, three southward and three eastward. It received and held 3,000 measures of water.* The molten sea was for the priests and the Levites to perform their ablutions. It is typical of that cleansing which His people need and which is so graciously provided by the Lord Himself. The immense quantity of water contained in the molten sea suggests the unlimited provision grace has made. In Revelation iv:6, we read that before the throne was a sea of glass like crystal. This sea of glass is an allusion to the molten sea in Solomon's temple. But it is not a sea of water, but of glass like crystal, because the redeemed (symbolically seen in the twenty-four elders) in glory do no longer need cleansing. They have entered upon a perfect and fixed state of holiness. The ten lavers with their bases were for the washing of the sacrifices. We see that instead of one laver there were ten; and there were also ten candlesticks and ten tables. Everything was an increase and on a large scale, while the whole house and its contents represented an untold wealth. It all foreshadows

*3,000 measures was the full amount it could contain; the usual contents, however, were 2,000 measures (1 Kings vii:26).

that coming glorious Kingdom of Christ. Then there will be the increase and the blessing typified by the ten lavers, the ten candlesticks and the ten tables. The brasen scaffold, five cubits long, five cubits broad and three cubits high which Solomon had made and upon which he stood and kneeled in prayer (2 Chron. vi:13) is not mentioned in this chapter.

The Priest's court was inclosed by a wall of hewn stones and a row of cedar beams (1 Kings vi:36). It had massive gates covered with brass. What Huram had worked for Solomon and Solomon's own work concludes this chapter and the account of the building of the temple.

3. The Dedication of the Temple.

Chapter v–vii:10.

The Ark Brought in the Temple.

CHAPTER V.

1. The Completion of the Temple. 1.
2. The Assembly Called by Solomon. 2–3.
3. The Ark Carried to its Place. 4–9.
4. The Contents of the Ark. 10.
5. The Praise and the Glory. 11–14.

The reader will find the comments on the dedication of the temple in the book of Kings (1 Kings viii. Pages 264–267). Verses 11–13 are not given in the record of the first book of Kings. The Levites exercised their holy office. What a sight it must have been when Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun in the lead with their sons and brethren, all clothed in white linen, with cymbals, psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding the trumpets! And they were as one, to make one sound. It expresses the unity of God's people. The one supreme thought and aim was to praise and thank the Lord. This was the one mind in which they all were as one. Then the mighty volume of many voices, the sound of the trumpets, cymbals and instruments of music broke forth. The one note in praise was "He is good;

for His mercy endureth forever." When the foundation of the second house was laid this praise was again uttered (Ezra iii:11). It must be remembered that David in his great prophetic psalm of praise ended with this note of praise "O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good; for His mercy endureth forever. . . . Blessed be the Lord God of Israel for ever and ever. And all the people said 'Amen' and praised the Lord" (1 Chron. xvi:34–36). In Psalm cxxxvi we find twenty-six times "His mercy endureth." How rich was that mercy towards Israel! He had graciously guided and kept them. He brought them into the land and all their enemies had been subdued. The house had been built and all had been accomplished. And greater mercy is for Israel in the future. He will re-gather them. All their enemies will be silenced. Another house will once more stand in Jerusalem and the covenant-promise made to David will be completely realized in the enthronement of the coming King upon the hill of Zion (Psalm ii). What praises His redeemed and restored people will then utter, when the Lord has been gracious to His people and to His land! (Psalm lxv:1; cxlvii:12). The scene here at the dedication of the temple foreshadows the future praise of Israel in the Kingdom which our Lord will bring and establish when He comes again.

And when this mighty praise ascended to Jehovah,when they made but one sound, heaven answered. The house was filled with the cloud. The visible symbol presence of Jehovah had come, as it came at the consecration of the tabernacle (Exod. xl:34–35). "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me." (Psalm l:23). "As an holy priesthood we are to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Peter ii:5). "By him therefore let us offer praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name" (Heb. xiii:15). And if Israel had but one thought and made but one sound, how much more should we, His heavenly people, enjoying greater riches and a greater nearness than Israel ever had, be of one mind in praising His name!

Solomon's Address and Dedicatory Prayer.

CHAPTER VI.

1. Solomon's Address to the Congregation. 1–11.
2. Solomon's Dedicatory Prayer. 12–39.

The report of Solomon's address is the same as recorded in 1 Kings viii:12–21. The opening statement of this chapter has been well characterized as a pregnant expression of the King's realization of the mystery of the Being of Jehovah, the all-creative God, as well as the condescension displayed in His self-limitation to dwell amongst men. (See Exodus xix:9; xx:21; Lev. xvi:2; Deut. iv:11; v:22). The prayer is nearly the same as in Kings (1 Kings viii:22–50). However, 1 Kings viii:51–61 is omitted and a few additional verses are added. The opening words of his great prayer are an acknowledgment of the greatness of Jehovah and the fulfillment of what God had promised to David, that is, the promise as it relates to him as David's son and the building of the house. He asks next that his prayers and the prayers of God's people may be heard as they ascend from the place where His Name is honored. Sin is acknowledged in connection with this request. "And when Thou hearest, forgive." In what follows, the different troubles are mentioned and Jehovah is implored to hear and to forgive. It is the model prayer for Israel. Confession of sin and prayer for forgiveness is linked with all petitions. Sin is acknowledged as the one cause of all troubles and disaster. Israel was thus taught in the prayer of Solomon to cast itself with supplication and repentance for sin upon Jehovah, and to find that the Lord heareth and delivereth His people. The subsequent history of Judah gives numerous instances of answered prayer. Note the omissions from the prayer report in 1 Kings viii and the different closing of the prayer in the account in Chronicles. It is explained by the prophetic character of Kings and the priestly character of Chronicles. Psalm cxxxii:8–10 is touched upon in verses 41–42.

The Answer by Fire—the Sacrifices and the Feast.

CHAPTER VII:1–10.

1. The Answer by Fire. 1–3.
2. The Sacrifices. 4–7.
3. The Feast of Tabernacles. 8–10.

A fuller manifestation of Jehovah's favor and presence followed the great prayer of the King. First the cloud had appeared and now the fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the house. This is complementary to 1 Kings viii:63–64. Nothing is mentioned of this answer by fire upon the sacrifices in the book of Kings. And now all the children of Israel saw the fire and the glory of the Lord; and they bowed themselves and worshipped, praising the Lord and saying, as the Levites had said before, "He is good, for His mercy endureth forever." So all Israel will see in a future day the glory of the Lord and the coming Lord in glory and worship Him (Zech. xii:10). The house was dedicated* by the King and all the people. The feast which followed was the feast of tabernacles. Its prophetic significance is mentioned in annotations on page 266.

4. The Second Vision.

CHAPTER VII: 11–12.

1. All Finished by Solomon. 11.
2. The Divine Answer and the Warning. 12–22.

A second time the Lord appeared unto Solomon. At this time He did not say again "Ask what shall I give thee," but He assured him that Solomon's prayer had been heard and He had chosen the dedicated place for Himself. He graciously assures the King that if He has chastised His people by sending drought, locusts or pestilence and they humble themselves, and seek His face, turning away from their wicked ways, that He will forgive and heal their land.

*The Hebrew word used for dedicate is the word "*channuka*." The Jews keep a feast called by that name.

There can be no recovery apart from the conditions mentioned in these verses. His people who have failed must first humble themselves, pray, seek His face, and turn away from their evil ways. The warning given in verses 19–22 has passed into history and found its literal fulfillment.

5. Solomon's Prosperity and Activities.

CHAPTER VIII.

1. The Fortifications of Cities. 1–6.
2. The Subjection of the Strangers. 7–10.
3. The Removal of the Daughter of Pharaoh. 11.
4. The Perfected Service. 12–16.
5. The Expedition to Ophir.

The activities of the King included the fortification of certain cities (See 1 Kings ix). First the cities are mentioned which Huram restored to Solomon. These are the cities which Solomon had previously given to him for security. 1 Kings ix:10–14 explains this statement which otherwise would be obscure. All the strangers, the Canaanites, dwelling in the land were put into subjection and had to pay tribute to Solomon. They were the servants. "But of the children of Israel did Solomon make no servants for his work; but they were men of war, and chief of his captains and captains of his horsemen and chariots." It foreshadows the age in which all will be put in subjection under Him who will be King to rule in righteousness (Isaiah xxxii:1; Heb. ii:8). Then His own people will serve Him, for they "shall be willing in the day of His power" (Psalm cx:3). The only mention made of the daughter of Pharaoh in Chronicles is in this chapter (verse 11). He married her in the beginning of the reign. Her removal to the house Solomon had built for her now took place. On the typical meaning of Pharaoh's daughter see 1 Kings iii:1 (page 253). The worship in the house was then carried on in a perfect way. At the appointed times all was done and all David, the man of God, had commanded was carried out (verse 14). There was no departure from the commandment of the King, so the house of the Lord was perfected. It foreshadows a perfect

obedience and worship which the earth will see when the true King has come. Then, as it was in Solomon's day, the King's commandment will be the absolute rule for everything (verse 15).

6. The Queen of Sheba. Solomon's Riches and Honors. Solomon's Death.

CHAPTER IX.

1. The Visit of the Queen. 1–12.
2. The Riches of Solomon. 13–16.
3. The Ivory Throne. 17–19.
4. Further Riches and Honors of Solomon. 20–29.
5. The Death of Solomon. 30–31.

The account of the visit of the Queen of Sheba is the same as it appears in 1 Kings x (annotations pages 269–270). The fame of Solomon had spread far and wide, and the Queen of Sheba comes to bring her tribute to admire and praise his wisdom and to give him presents of glorious things and of great value. And more than that. "King Solomon passed all the Kings of the earth in riches and wisdom." A type of the coming King who will be head of all. "And all the Kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom that God had put in his heart. And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and raiment, harness and spices, horses and mules, a rate year by year" (verses 23–24). In annotations on 1 Kings x, we have pointed out how all this glory and the wealth of Solomon and Jerusalem foreshadows the fulfillment of many prophecies concerning the glorious reign of our Lord Jesus Christ. Greater splendor and glory will rest upon Him and come to Jerusalem than in Solomon's reign. Many beautiful dsecriptions of that coming glory, foreshadowed in this chapter, we find in different parts of the prophetic Word (see Isa. lx:3–14, lxvi:10–13; Psalm lxxii).

Nothing is mentioned in Chronicles of Solomon's great failure. As nothing is said in the first part of Chronicles on David's sin, so the sin and failure of Solomon is passed

over in this part of the Chronicles. His reign is described as unmarred by failure, a reign of undimmed glory. Such will be the reign of Him who is greater than Solomon. Solomon's failure, however, is indicated in this chapter. The horses out of Egypt mentioned in verse 28, and the fact that he multiplied horses and sought the gold of Ophir, shows that he became lifted up.

"Solomon enjoyed the sure promises of God. He sins in the means by which he seeks to satisfy his own lusts; and although the result was the accomplishment of the promise, yet he bears the consequences of so doing. Outwardly only the fulfillment of the promise was seen. In fact there was something else. Without sending for horses from Egypt, and gold from Ophir, Solomon would have been rich and glorious, for God had promised it. By doing this he enriched himself, but he departs from God and from His word. Having given himself up to his desires after riches and glory, he had multiplied the number of his wives, and in his old age they turned away his heart. This neglect of the word, which at first appeared to have no bad effect (for he grew rich, as though it had been but the fulfilment of God's promise), soon led to a departure more serious in its nature and in its consequences, to influence more powerful, and more immediately opposed to the commands of God's word, and at last to flagrant disobedience of its most positive and essential requirements. The slippery path of sin is always trodden with accelerated steps, because the first sin tends to weaken in the soul the authority and power of that which alone can prevent our committing still greater sins—that is, the word of God, as well as the consciousness of His presence, which imparts to the word all its practical power over us.*

*Synopsis.

II. The Rebellion of the Ten Tribes.

CHAPTER X.

1. Rehoboam Made King. 1.
2. Jeroboam's Return from Egypt and his Request. 2–5.
3. Rehoboam's Answer. 6–15.
4. The Revolt and Rehoboam's Flight. 16–19.

What followed Solomon's fall when he turned away from the Lord, who so graciously had appeared unto him twice, is unrecorded in Chronicles. 1 Kings xi:9–43 contains these events. Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, had lifted up his hand against Solomon (1 Kings xi:27). He planned secretly a revolt against the King, and when he went out of Jerusalem, most likely to carry out his plans, the prophet Ahijah met him, and in renting his own garment into ten pieces announced that God would take the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and give to Jeroboam the ten tribes. Then Solomon sought to kill Jeroboam and he fled into Egypt, and was in Egypt until Solomon died. It is here where the account in Chronicles comes in. Rehoboam ("Enlarger of the People"), the only son of Solomon mentioned in the Bible, went to Shechem, where all Israel had come together to make him King. Jeroboam had returned from Egypt and appeared on the scene, sent by the people to conduct negotiations in their behalf. Jeroboam demanded a lightening of the heavy burden of forced labor and taxation which Solomon had put upon them. If this request would be granted they were ready to serve Jeroboam. The King asked for three days to consider the demand. He first turned to the aged men and consulted those who had been closely associated with his father. They advised him to use kindness to avert the threatening rebellion. "A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger" (Prov. xv:1). If Rehoboam had heeded this inspired saying of his father, he would have followed the advice which had been given. But instead he turned to the young men, "the young men* that had grown up with him." They readily gave advice how the peoples' demand, "Ease some-

*Hebrew: Children.

what the yoke that thy father did put upon us," should be answered. It was a foolish advice. The threat to increase their burdens, and that while his father had used whips he would use scorpions,* was to overawe the people and bring them into submission. It seems almost impossible that Rehoboam should follow such advice. If Eccles.ii: 18–19 applies to this son of Solomon, the father's fears were well founded. He certainly showed that he was not a wise man, but a fool. Yet there was another reason why Rehoboam listened to the foolish counsel. "So the King hearkened not unto the people, for the cause was of God, that the Lord might perform His Word, which He spake by Ahijah, the Shilonite, to Jeroboam, the son of Nebat." And the offended people answered the King with the same spirit and declared their independence. In contempt they said, "And now David see to thine own house." Then foolishly Rehoboam sent one of the officials who were hated on account of their office, Hadoram, who was over the tribute. The people became infuriated and stoned him to death. King Rehoboam had to make haste to escape a similar fate. The revolt had come. "And Israel rebelled against the house of David." The words spoken to Solomon (1 Kings xi:11–13) were now fulfilled.

III. The History of the Kings of Judah. Events Leading up to the Captivity.

Chapters xi–xxxvi:14.

1. Decline and Apostasy under Rehoboam, Abijah and Asa. Chapters xi–xvi.

Rehoboam's Reign.

CHAPTER XI.

1. The Forbidden War. 1–4.
2. The National Defence. 5–12.
3. Jeroboam's Wickedness and Rehoboam's Strength. 13–17.
4. Rehoboam's Family. 18–23.

The provocation to go to war with the tribes which had revolted was great. Rehoboam was ready to start the civil

*A cruel whip to which pieces of sharp metal were attached.

war. He gathered 180,000 men of Judah and Benjamin to fight against Israel and to restore the tribes to his kingdom. Shemaiah, the man of God, the prophet in Judah, received a message from the Lord, which he faithfully delivered. "Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren; return every man to his house, for this thing is done of me." It required courage to deliver such a message in the midst of the great preparations for war. Rehoboam and the people obeyed and did not go to war. They must have realized that if they disobeyed they would have fought against God. And the Lord also blessed the King and his people for believing the Word and being obedient. He always blesses when there is obedience. He built and fortified fifteen cities. "He fortified the strongholds, and put captains in them and store of victuals and of oil and wine." In several places he put shields and spears. Thus he made ready for a possible invasion from the side of Egypt, for Jeroboam, his rival, had been there. Rehoboam's fears were well founded, as we shall find in the next chapter.

Then there was a great exodus of priests and Levites from the domain of Jeroboam. As we learned from 1 Kings xii:25–33, Jeroboam established a wicked worship, setting up two golden calves at Beth-el and Dan. The priests he made were taken, not from the sons of Levi, but from the lowest of the people (1 Kings xii:31). The true priest and Levites who had remained with him were cast off from executing their holy and God-given office. He also had priests "for the devils." The Hebrew word translated "devils" means "hairy ones" and "goats." In Egypt the sacred goat was worshipped and Jeroboam's worship was patterned. The priests and Levites who were driven away by Jeroboam strengthened the Kingdom of Judah. They had a wholesome influence upon the otherwise weak son of Solomon. "They made Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, strong." They all walked in the way of David and Solomon for three years. Most likely fear had much to do with it. We read nothing of turning to the Lord and seeking His face.

His family record is given. Mahalath is mentioned as

his wife, a daughter of Jerimoth, probably the son of one of David's concubines (1 Chron. iii:9). Then he took Maacah, a grand-daughter of Absalom. According to Josephus, Maacah's mother was Tamar, the daughter of Absalom (2 Sam. xiv:27). He had many wives and concubines. The polygamous tendencies of his father and grandfather were thus indulged by him, and in all probability his apostasy started from this sin. But he acted wisely and dispersed all his children throughout the whole country. Having twenty-eight sons and many more daughters, there was great possibilities of conspiracies, which he avoided by scattering them in different directions.

Rehoboam's Apostasy, Punishment and Death.

CHAPTER XII.

1. Rehoboam's Apostasy. 1.
2. Punishment through Shishak. 2–12.
3. Death of Rehoboam. 13–16.

The Kingdom had been established; Rehoboam had strengthened himself and lived in the indulgence of the flesh. Then followed the awful plunge into apostasy. "He forsook the law of the Lord and all Israel with him." Idolatry in the high places and under every green tree was established and fostered by him. "And there were also Sodomites in the land, and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord cast out before the children of Israel" (I Kings xiv:22–24).

Then Shishak came from Egypt against Jerusalem with an immense army. He was the first king of the twenty-second, or Bubastic dynasty. In his army were the Lubims (Libyans), Sukkims (desert tribes) and the Ethiopians. The cities which Rehoboam had built and fortified could not keep him out, for the Lord had brought him to punish Jerusalem. When Jerusalem was threatened and the Egyptian hordes were about to proceed against Jerusalem, Shemaiah, the Man of God, appeared once more. He brought the solemn message from the Lord, "Ye have forsaken me, and therefore have I left you in the hand

Shishak." That for which the Lord always looks first of all, when His people have sinned and departed from Him, was done by the princes and the King. "They humbled themselves." And when the Lord saw that they humbled themselves and were returning to Him, He had compassion on them. Some deliverance was granted and the wrath was not poured out upon the city. And He is still the same gracious Lord, always ready to forgive His people, when they return unto Him. However, the pride of Rehoboam had to be dealt with and, therefore, Shishak was permitted to take away the immense riches which Solomon had stored up in the treasures of the house of the Lord and in the king's house. The shields of gold were also carried away. Sad is the record of this son of Solomon: "And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord." Had he prepared his heart to seek the Lord, he would not have done the evil which he did. The only thing which can keep from evil is to seek the Lord and walk in obedience to His Word. Rehoboam's reign, with the exception of three years in which he walked in the way of David and Solomon, was a reign of trouble. Besides Shishak's invasion "there were wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continually" (verse 15).

The Reign of Abijah.

CHAPTER XIII.

1. The Beginning of his Reign. 1–2.
2. War with Jeroboam. 3–19.
3. Death of Jeroboam. 20.
4. Abijah's Family. 21–22.

Abijah is called in Kings, Abijam, and in 2 Chron. xiii:21, Abijahu. His reign was not of a long duration; he outlived his father Rehoboam only three years. His mother was Maachah (2 chron. xi:20). She is called here Michaiah, probably because she was the queen-mother. There is no discrepancy between chapter xi:20 and the second verse of this chapter, in which she is called a daughter of Uriel of Gibeah. Josephus is probably correct when he states that

Uriel was the husband of Tamar, the daughter of Absalom. In chapter xi:20, she is called a daughter of Absalom,* or rather grand-daughter, for one word is used in Hebrew for daughter and grand-daughter.

Of Abijah's evil walk, and that his heart was not perfect with the Lord, the Chronicles has nothing to say. That is found in Kings. That things went from bad to worse under Abijah's brief reign may be learned from the fact that his son Asa had to institute a reformation, and Maachah, the mother of Abijah and grandmother of Asa, had to be put away, because she had put up an Asherah, a vile idol-image in a grove (1 Kings xv:13; 2 Chron. xv:16). Chronicles gives an account of Abijah's war with Jeroboam. The two armies of Judah and Israel faced each other; Abijah had 400,000 men and Jeroboam 800,000. There is no reason to doubt the accuracy of these figures, as some critics have done. Both sides were confident of victory. Jeroboam had twice as many men as Abijah, and they were "mighty men of valor." He trusted in his superior number. It was different with Abijah, King of Judah. Before the battle began the King delivered a remarkable address in which he expressed his confidence in Jehovah. The Lord had given the Kingdom to David and to his sons by a covenant of salt, said Abijah. The covenant of salt refers to a very ancient custom. When a guest had been entertained in a tent and partaken of salt with his host, the obligation of the latter towards his guest was one of inviolable sanctity. The covenant of Jehovah with David was like a covenant of salt, that is, inviolable. Abijah believed in that covenant. Then he mentioned Jeroboam, whom sarcastically he calls "the servant of Solomon," his revolt, his idolatry, his opposition to the priesthood. He closed his address with a confident statement. "Behold, God Himself is with us for our captain, and His priests with sounding trumpets to cry alarm against you." Then the warning: "O children of Israel, fight ye not against the Lord God of your fathers; for ye shall not prosper." Abijah

*Abishalom in 1 Kings xv:2 is the same as Absalom.

won the battle. When they were encircled by the enemy they cried to Jehovah in their hour of need, and He was faithful to His own Word (Numb. x:9). When the priests sounded with the trumpets, when they shouted, no doubt in faith and anticipation of Jehovah's interference, then God smote Jeroboam and all Israel and delivered them into their hands. They had prevailed because they relied upon the Lord God, and so shall we prevail if we trust in the Lord. With that battle Jeroboam's strength was broken. The wicked King, whose awful idolatry was the ruin of Israel, never recovered his strength. The Lord struck him and he died.

The Reign of Asa.

CHAPTER XIV.

1. The Death of Abijah and Asa becomes King. 1.
2. The Good Beginning. 2–8.
3. His Victory over Zerah. 9–15.

Asa*, the son of Abijah, began his reign well. He did what was right in the sight of the Lord. The strange altars, the high places and the images were taken away and the groves cut down. He was not satisfied with this work, but he also commanded Judah to seek the Lord. The land was quiet. The Lord blessed him and the land for the faithful work which had been done. "The land had rest, and he had no war in those years, because the Lord had given him rest. It was a remarkable work for one so young; probably Asa was not yet twelve years old when he became King. Maachah, his grandmother, most likely had some oversight as "queen-mother."† Notice the great prosperity which followed the work he had done. "The Kingdom was quiet before him." Cities were built and fortified. They readily acknowledged that it was all of God. "Because we have sought the Lord our God, we have sought Him, and He hath given us rest on all sides." So they built and prospered.

*Asa means "healing," or "who will heal?"

†In 1 Kings xv:9 she is called the mother of Asa; the same is the case in our book xv:16. Mother in these passages has the meaning of grandmother.

But faith had to be tested. A powerful army under the leadership of Zerah, an Ethiopian, came against Judah. The battle was to take place in the open field, in the valley of Zephathah. Before the forces ever clashed Asa cried to the Lord. His prayer is most beautiful and simple. It still breatheth freshness and has been a help to all God's trusting people in all ages. "Lord it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power; help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, thou art our God, let not man prevail against thee." What confidence and trust! He put the whole matter upon the Lord. Their enemies were His enemies. In His name, resting on Him, they went forth. May we know and practice the same confidence. Such a prayer could not remain unanswered. The Lord smote the Ethiopians and gave to His people a great victory.

The Reign of Asa. Warning and Reformation.

CHAPTER XV.

1. The Warning Message of Azariah. 1–7.
2. Asa's Response and Reformation. 8–19.

But the Lord knew the danger which threatened Asa. He had begun well. He was faithful to Jehovah, and he and the people had a wonderful demonstration that the Lord hears and answers prayer. Would he continue and end as well as he had begun? The Spirit of God came at this important time upon Azariah ("whom the Lord helps"). When victorious Asa returned the prophet met him and delivered his message. It was a needed and timely message, for the danger for God's people is always the greatest after a victory is won and outward success and prosperity is enjoyed. "The Lord is with you, while ye be with Him; and if ye seek Him, He will be found of you; but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you." This has, of course, nothing to do with the question of salvation and the possession of eternal life, which the believer hath in Christ. To bear a real testimony, fruit unto God and have the victory

at all times, a close walk with the Lord is needed. Apart from this, God's people are helpless and must needs dishonor their Lord. Verses 3–6 picture the results of departure from the Lord, such as were among Israel during the period of the Judges. "Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak; for your work shall be rewarded."

And Asa hearing these words, believed what the prophet had said and then acted upon them. It is the true path to blessing, learning, believing and obeying. The abominable idols were removed and the altar before the porch of the Lord, which had fallen into disuse, was renewed by him. (2 Chron. viii:12). A great sacrificial scene followed. In connection with it they entered into a covenant to seek the Lord. The religious enthusiasm ran so high that they determined to put to death every person who did not seek the Lord. And when they sought Him with their whole desire He was found of them and gave them rest. These are precious and encouraging words. He is the Lord, who changeth not. It is still true to-day and ever will be true. He will be found by those who seek Him with their whole desire.

Asa's Relapse and Death.

CHAPTER XVI.

1. War between Asa and Baasha. 1–6.
2. Hanani's Rebuke. 7–9.
3. Hanani Imprisoned. 10—11.
4. Asa's Illness and Death. 12–14.

Much has been made by critics of the supposed wrong date, the thirty sixth year of the reign of Asa. Compare 1 Kings xv:33 with the first verse of this chapter to see the apparent discrepancy. If the invasion of Judah by Baasha occurred shortly after the events recorded in the precious chapter, it was in the thirty-sixth year after the revolt of the ten tribes. This presents a possible solution. Others think it is the error of a scribe.*

*As the dates in 2 Chron. xv:19; xvi:1 are incompatible with that of Baasha's death (1 Kings xvi:8), and consequently, of course, with that of Baasha's war against Asa, commentators have tried to obviate the difficulty, either by supposing that the numeral 35 refers, not to the

Asa relapsed and failed when Baasha, King of Israel, came against Judah and built Ramah (see annotations, pages 279–280; 1 Kings xv and xvi). In unbelief Asa made an alliance with the King of Syria. He feared Baasha very much. In Jeremiah xli:9, we read of a pit which he made for fear of Baasha; probably to hide there. "The fear of man bringeth a snare." How this reveals the weakness of man! After all the evidences of the Lord's mercy and power Asa could forsake thus the Lord and enter into an unholy alliance with a heathen king. He gained the object he sought and Baasha was forced to abandon his plan. But God had been a witness of it all. He sent through Hanani ("graciously given by the Lord" the meaning of his name) and rebuked the king for what he had done. The Lord reminds him of the far greater host which threatened him (chapter xiv:9–15) and the deliverance He had wrought. Beautiful are the final words of Hanani. "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him." The Lord looks for faith, for confidence. Our hearts are perfect toward Him when we trust Him and are obedient to His Word. Then all His power is with us and for us.

Wars to the end was the punishment announced upon Asa. And Asa showed his true state of soul, when, instead of saying, "I have sinned," he began to rage; when instead of beseeching Hanani to pray for him, he put him in prison. He was away from the Lord and his behavior made it known. Stricken by disease, no doubt to humble him and bring him back to the Lord, he sought not the Lord, but the physicians. These were in all probability magicians, who used enchantments. There was no return unto the Lord; no repentance.

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date of Asa's accession, but to that of the separation of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, or else by emendating the numeral in the Book of Chronicles. The latter is, evidently, the only satisfactory solution. There is manifestly here a copyist's mistake, and the numeral which we would substitute for 35 is not 15 but 25—and this for reasons too long to explain.—Bible History.

2. Reformation under Jehoshaphat.

Chapters xvii–xx.

Jehoshaphat's Reformation and Increase.

CHAPTER XVII.

1. The Lord was with Jehoshaphat. 1–5.
2. The Revival under his Reign. 6–9.
3. His Increase. 10–19.

Jehoshaphat, the son of Asa, began his reign by strengthening himself against Israel.* The Lord was with him, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, which means David's faithful walk before his great sin. The Lord greatly blessed him by establishing his kingdom and in giving him riches and honor in abundance. The Lord kept all His promises. When Jehoshaphat saw the evidences of divine blessing, his heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord. This does not mean that he was puffed up, but that he became encouraged to go on in the good way he was following. The high places and groves were removed by him. In 1 Kings xxii:43, we read that he did not take away the high places and that the people offered incense there. The work was not completely done. While he personally wanted to see it accomplished and commanded that it be done, the people failed in fully carrying out his wishes. "For as yet the people had not prepared their hearts unto the God of their fathers" (xx:33). Another work he did, was the sending out of teachers to instruct in the knowledge of the Lord. Their names are interesting. Ben-hail, "Son of Strength"; Abadiah, "Servant of the Lord"; Zechariah, "the Lord remembers"; Nethaneel, "Gift of God"; Michariah, "Who is like the Lord?"

*He strengthened his kingdom against Israel, an enemy more dangerous by their example than by their strength. When anything pretends to be in connection with God and to acknowledge Him, there is no safety except in judging it with a spiritual judgment—which can only be formed through a just sense of God's honor—making no terms with that which pretends to be connected with Him, and treating it as an enemy. This is what Jehoshaphat did at first; and, as he did not walk in the ways of Israel, Jehovah established the kingdom in his hand.—Synopsis.

He also sent priests and Levites. "And they taught in Judah and had the book of the Law of the Lord with them and went about throughout all the cities of Judah and taught the people." It was a revival in teaching and in the study of the Word. No true revival can take place unless it is connected with the Word.

And the results soon came. The fear of the Lord fell upon the surrounding kingdoms. They feared to touch the people who were thus blessed. The Philistines brought presents and tribute silver; the Arabians immense herds of cattle. It was all a fulfillment of Deut. xi:22–25. Judah had a phenomenal increase. Without doubt this chapter presents one of the best scenes in the Kingdom of Judah.

Jehoshaphat's Sinful Alliance with Ahab.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1. The Alliance with Ahab. 1–3.
2. Ahab's False Prophets. 4–11.
3. Micaiah's Prophecy. 12–27.
4. The Fatal Battle at Ramoth-Gilead. 28–34.

The same record also appears in 1 Kings xii, to which the reader may turn for further annotations. Jehoshaphat's prosperity became a snare to him. Riches and honor he had in abundance. No doubt lifted up in his heart and self-secure, saying perhaps, "I am increased in goods and have need of nothing," on a certain day he joined affinity with Ahab. Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram married Ahab's wicked daughter Athaliah (xxi:6). This was a fatal step for Jehoshaphat and the house of Judah. It brought him into alliance with Ahab, the wicked; he almost lost his life on account of it; only his prayer saved him (verse 31); and Athaliah introduced the vile idolatries of Ahab into Judah (xxii:3) and became the murderess of the royal seed (xxii:10–12).

The historical account of Jehoshaphat's alliance with Ahab, the false prophets, the prophecy of Micaiah, the battle of Ramoth-Gilead, is commented upon in the record of the First book of Kings.

That Jehoshaphat knew the Lord and was His is blessedly illustrated in verses 31–32. In the hour of need, the king in such bad company turned to the Lord and cried to Him. There was an immediate answer and the King of Judah was saved. What a power prayer is! May all God's people make use of it. As we say on page 294, "Jehoshaphat was miraculously saved, but Ahab was miraculously killed."

Rebuke and Restoration.

CHAPTER XIX.

1. The Rebuke by the Prophet. 1–3.
2. Further Revival and Restoration. 4–11.

At sun-down Ahab, the King of Israel died, while his ally Jehoshaphat, saved through the mercy of God, returned to his home in peace in Jerusalem. Then Jehu, the son of Hanani, met him. Asa, the father of Jehoshaphat, had been rebuked by Hanani, and had put him in prison for it. The son of Hanani rebukes Jehoshaphat. We read no answer from the King, but his actions show that the rebuke went home to his conscience. He must have repented of the unholy alliance with the enemy of the Lord. Jehu said to him, "Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? Therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord." This principle is the same in the New Testament. God's people are a separated people. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Cor. vi:14). And the Lord acknowledged the good Jehoshaphat had done and his attitude, a heart prepared to seek God.

Graciously had Jehovah restored the king who had failed and dishonored Him. He had returned in peace, bowed before the divine rebuke and dwelt in Jerusalem. Then he went out again to do service for the Lord. He became at once active in bearing testimony and helping God's people, bringing them back to the fear of the Lord. He caused judgment and righteousness to be executed in the land.

Notice how in this revival the Lord is before Jehoshaphat; eight times in verses 4–11 the Lord is mentioned.

Judah Invaded. Jehoshaphat's Prayer and Deliverance.

CHAPTER XX.

1. The Invasion. 1–2.
2. Jehoshaphat's Great Prayer. 3–13.
3. Jehovah's Answer through Jahaziel. 14–17.
4. Prostrated before the Lord. 18–19.
5. The Great Deliverance. 20–25.
6. In the Valley of Berachah. 26–30.
7. The Record of Jehoshaphat. 31–34.
8. Alliance with Ahaziah. 35–37.

An invasion of Judah by Moab, Ammon and others followed. Then Jehoshaphat feared and set himself to seek the Lord and proclaimed a fast throughout Judah. Though the enemy was nearing Jerusalem and the danger was great, there was no disorder or confusion. They all looked to Jehovah and that gave them calmness. In troubles and trials God's people must always look first to the Lord and seek His face. A great company gathered together, even from the cities in Judah, to seek the Lord. It was one of the most remarkable prayer meetings reported in the Bible. The king stood in the midst of the large congregation. And what a prayer it was he uttered! What earnestness and faith breatheth in every word! He addressed God as in heaven and as the ruler over all the kingdoms of the nations. In His hand there is power and might; none is able to withstand Him. It is a good way in approaching God to remember what a wonderful and almighty God and Lord He is. Then Jehoshaphat speaks of His dealing with His people Israel and speaks of Abraham—"thy friend forever." The prayer of Solomon in dedicating the house is mentioned (verse 9). Then he tells the Lord of the invasion, and the object of Ammon and Moab "to cast us out of thy possession which thou hast given us to inherit." Most beautiful is the ending of his prayer. "O, our God, wilt Thou not judge them?" They were His enemies, for they came against His land and His pepole. "For we have

no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon Thee." Here is the spirit and soul-attitude which pleases God. Whenever and wherever it is manifested God's answer and gracious help is not far away. But it is just this spirit of dependence and expectation from the Lord which is so little known among God's people.

In the midst of the congregation was a Levite by name of Jahaziel ("He will be seen of God"), of the sons of Asaph. Upon him came the Spirit of the Lord and through him there came the answer, "Ye shall not need to fight in this battle; set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem; fear not, nor be dismayed; to-morrow go out against them, for the Lord will be with you." And the heavenly answer was believed. The king took the lead in bowing his head with his face to the ground. The people did likewise. In anticipation of the coming victory the Levites praised the Lord with a loud voice.

The next morning the divine direction was obeyed. The king addressed the people to have faith in God. Then he appointed singers arrayed in their official garments* to go before the army and sing as if it were a triumphal procession: "Praise the Lord; for His mercy endureth forever." We read nothing of swords or spears. They needed no weapons. Probably they left them at home, for the Lord had said, "Ye shall not need to fight in this battle." And when they began to sing and praise, trusting in the promise, the Lord began His work in overthrowing and destroying their enemies. The invading armies were annihilated and none escaped.

A great praise-service in the valley of Berachah ("Blessing") followed. Jehoshaphat in the forefront of them, with the people returned to Jerusalem with joy. They came to Jerusalem with psalteries and harps and trumpets unto the house of the Lord. And the kingdoms feared God when they heard what the Lord had done.

*The expression, "beauty of holiness" is, literally, "holy array."

The prophetic application of all this is not difficult to make. Jehoshaphat and the people with him are typical of the remnant of God's earthly people, that God-fearing remnant which dwells in the land and in Jerusalem during the great tribulation. The prayer of Jehoshaphat, the divine answer and the great deliverance, foreshadows the cry for help and deliverance of that remnant, while the overthrow of their enemies, with the coming of the Lord, is foreshadowed in the deliverance of Jehoshaphat and the people. The praise will be great in Jerusalem, when the Lord acts in behalf of His believing remnant, at the close of the times of the Gentiles. Then the kingdoms of the earth will fear God.

It would be well if Jehoshaphat's life had ended with this beautiful scene. But it does not. He entered another unholy alliance, for commercial reasons, with wicked Ahaziah, King of Israel. The ships to go to Tarshish never reached their destination; they were broken. "Again had Jehoshaphat to learn in the destruction of his fleet at Ezion-Gaber that undertakings, however well planned and apparently unattended by outward danger, can only end in disappointment and failure, when they who are the children of God combine with those who walk in the ways of sin."

And how many Christians have made the same experience ! God cannot bless the believer when he is in fellowship with an unbeliever.

3. Decline and Apostasy under Jehoram, Ahaziah and Athaliah.

Chapters xxi-xxii.

1. Jehoram's Wicked Reign. 1–7.
2. Revolt of Edom. 8–9.
3. Revolt of Libnah. 10–11.
4. The Message of Elijah. 12–15.
5. Judah Invaded. 16–17.
6. Jehoram's Sickness and Death. 18–20.

Jehoram was Jehoshaphat's firstborn. Jehoshaphat had six other sons to whom he gave great riches, but the kingdom was given to Jehoram. He walked in wickedness. "For

he had the daughter of Ahab to wife and he wrought that which was evil in the sight of the Lord." When Jehoram was in power, he slew all his brethren with the sword and also princes in Israel. The daughter of the murderer Ahab may have instigated the horrible crime. Jehoshaphat had joined affinity with Ahab (chapter xviii:1), and married his son Jehoram to Athaliah. "What a man sows that will he reap." His unholy alliance began to bear fruit. And how often have Christian parents seen their children depart from God and follow altogether the wicked ways of the world, because they themselves had set the example. Then the enemies of Judah came and different revolts took place.

The writing which came to Jehoram from the prophet Elijah is interesting and presents some difficulties. Elijah had been translated a number of years before. To solve the difficulty some say that the name Elijah should be Elisha, who was then living and ministering in connection with Samaria. There is no need of doing this. It does not say that Elijah sent that writing, but it says: "There came a writing from Elijah the prophet." Elijah knew Jehoshaphat and he knew his son Jehoram, who was for several years the co-regent of his father. The Lord showed him beforehand the evil course Jehoram would take, and how he would follow the wicked ways of Ahab, Elijah knew so well. Then he received the message exposing the wickedness of Jehoram, "like to the whoredoms of Ahab," and announcing the judgment upon Jehoram. This message was probably intrusted by Elijah to Elisha, and when the proper moment had come this man of God delivered the writing to Jehoram, telling him at the same time that it was from Elijah.

Fearful was the end of this murderous and idolatrous King. He died of sore diseases, unrepenting, and thus as a lost soul passed into the blackness of darkness forever (Jude 13). And his people made no burning for him (burning incense) like the burning of his fathers; neither was he buried in the sepulchres of the Kings.

Ahaziah and Athaliah.

CHAPTER XXII.

1. Ahaziah and his Evil Reign. 1–4.
2. His Alliance with Ahab's Son. 5.
3. At Jezreel. 6–7.
4. Jehu's Judgment and Ahaziah's End. 8–9.
5. Athaliah. 10–12

When the Philistines and Arabians invaded Judah they carried away the treasures of Jehoram, and slew his sons. Only Jehoahaz the youngest son was left (xxi:17). He is also known as Ahaziah and Azariah. These names in Hebrew have the same meaning "upheld by Jehovah." Poor, young Ahaziah still reaps the harvest of the unfortunate alliance of his grandfather Jehoshaphat. The leaven is doing its dreadful work. His mother Athaliah, granddaughter of the wicked Omri and daughter of Ahab, was his counsellor to do wickedly. He therefore did evil in the sight of the Lord, like the house of Ahab, for they were his counsellors, after the death of his father, to his destruction. What might have been if his grandfather Jehoshaphat had not made affinity with Ahab and his house and marrying his son Jehoram to Athaliah! Ahaziah's end, after he went with his uncle Jehoram, the son of Ahab, and the circumstances connected with it we have already annotated in Second Kings.* Athaliah's awful crime in slaying the seed royal and the miraculous preservation of Joash, the reader will also find explained in 2 Kings xi:1–3.

4. Reformation Under Joash.

Chapters xxiii–xxiv.

Joash King; Athaliah's Execution.

CHAPTER XXIII.

1. Joash made King. 1–11.
2. Athaliah Slain. 12–15.
3. Jehoiada and the Revival. 16–21.

The annotations to this interesting page in the history of Judah have already been made in connection with 2 Kings

*See pages 328–329.

xi. We therefore pass over the preservation of the young child Joash and his hiding away in the Lord's house, on this account. However we call attention to the differences in the two accounts in 2 Kings xi and 2 Chron. xxiii. As stated before the Book of Chronicles is written from the priestly and Levitical view point; this explains the greater detail about Jehoiada, the priest, given in Chronicles. A careful study and comparison of the two chapters will show that there are no discrepancies.

"The differences, and even more the similarity, in the narratives of the event in the Books of Kings and Chronicles have suggested what to some appear discrepancies of detail. It is well to know that, even if these were established, they would not in any way invalidate the narrative itself, since in any case they only concern some of its minor details, not its substance. The most notable difference is that in the Book of Kings the plot and its execution seem entirely in the hands of the military; in Chronicles, exclusively in those of the priests and Levites. But in Chronicles also—and, indeed, there alone —the five military leaders are named; while, on the other hand, the narrative in the Book of Kings throughout admits the leadership of the priest Jehoiada. And even a superficial consideration must convince that both the priests and the military must have been engaged in the undertaking, and that neither party could have dispensed with the other. A revolution inaugurated by the high-priest in favor of his nephew, who for six years had been concealed in the Temple, and which was to be carried out within the precincts of the Sanctuary itself, could no more have taken place without the co-operation of the priesthood than a change in the occupancy of the throne could have been brought about without the support of the military power. And this leaves untouched the substance of the narrative in the two accounts."*

Athaliah received her just recompense. The youthful Joash occupied the throne of David, and the faithful priest Jehoiada was the instrument who brought about the needed

*Dr. Edersheim.

revival. The beginning was in a solemn covenant. It was a covenant which bound the young ruler and the people together to be true to Jehovah, as it is demanded of the Lord's people; there was also a covenant between the King and the people (1 Kings xi:17). And the revival under the priestly direction began by the destruction of the idols and false worship and a return to Jehovah and the true worship of His Name. Every true revival must needs begin the same way. Tested by this standard most of the present day revivals are found wanting. "And he set the porters at the gates of the house of the Lord, that none which was unclean in anything should enter in." The house of the Lord was guarded against all that is unclean. How different from the corruption which is tolerated in Christendom, in that which is "the house," the professing church.

The Temple Repaired; Apostasy and its Results.

CHAPTER XXIV.

1. Joash's Reign. 1–3.
2. The Failure of the Priests. 4–7.
3. The Temple Repaired. 8–14.
4. Death of Jehoiada. 15–16.
5. The Apostasy. 17–22.
6. The Syrian Invasion. 23–24.
7. The Death of Joash. 25–27.

Joash was seven years old when he began his reign and reigned forty years. As long as Jehoiada the priest lived, he did what was right in the sight of the Lord. The account of the repairing of the temple needs no further comment here.* Jehoiada, the faithful priest, who had so much to do with these important events during this crisis, died 130 years old. Being connected by marriage with the royal house and in appreciation of the great work he had accomplished "because he had done good in Israel, both toward God, and toward His house," they buried him among the kings. After his death it became manifest that the revival which had taken place had its mainstay in the good priest;

*See Annotations on 2 Kings xii.

Joash's convictions and faithfulness to Jehovah were but skin-deep. A reaction set in, as it has been so often in the history of the church. He listened to the evil counsel of the princes of Judah, and then they left the house of the Lord God and became idolators. The result was wrath from God upon Judah and Jerusalem for this tresspass. Such is man in his corrupt nature! But the gracious Lord did not give them up. His righteousness demanded judgment, yet in infinite mercy he sent prophets to bring them back. These unnamed prophets testified against them, but they would not give ear. They hardened their hearts against the Lord and His prophets. A worse deed followed. Jehoiada had a son by name of Zechariah; he was the cousin of the King. Upon him came the Spirit of God and he announced the fact that because they had forsaken the Lord, He had also forsaken them (2 Chron. xv:2). Like Stephen, the first martyr of the church, Zechariah had touched the sore spot; when they heard these things, they were cut to the heart. Then they stoned Zechariah as their offspring later stoned Stephen. It was worse than base ingratitude from the side of Joash that he gave the commandment to murder the son of Jehoiada. The King remembered not the kindness which Jehoiada his father "had done him, but slew his son." But there is a difference between the last words of this martyr-prophet and the last words of the first martyr of the church. Stephen prayed: "Lord lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts vii:60). Zechariah said: "The Lord look upon it and require it." Typically he represents the tribulation martyrs of the Jewish remnant, who will give the testimony concerning righteousness and the coming King at the end of the present age, and whose blood will cry for vengeance to heaven (Rev. vi:9–11). There can be no doubt our Lord meant this Zechariah when He uttered the words in Matthew xxiii:35. It is true He speaks of him as the son of Barachias ("blessed of Jehovah"); but this is not a difficulty. Barachias was another name Jehoiada bore and well suited to his character. Our Lord informs us of the place where he was slain, "between the temple and the altar." Joash,

completely forsaken by the Lord, was defeated by the Syrians. Great diseases came upon him and he was murdered by his own servants. Like Jehoram he was not buried in the sepulchres of the kings.

5. Decline and Apostasy under Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham and Ahaz.

Chapters xxv–xxviii.

The Reign of Amaziah.

CHAPTER XXV.

1. The Record of Amaziah's Reign. 1–4.
2. The War against Edom. 5–13.
3. His Idolatry and the Divine Rebuke. 14–16.
4. The War between Judah and Israel. 17–25.
5. The Death of Amaziah. 26–28.

Joash's son Amaziah ("strength of the Lord") took up the government in Judah when he was twenty-five years old. His mother's name, Jehoaddan, means "Jehovah is pleased." Perhaps it was through her influence, as her name indicates godliness, that her son began the reign well. He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. But the Lord, who looks deeper and knows the heart of man, knew that it was "not with a perfect heart." He dealt out justice to the murderers of his father, and also adhered closely to the law of God. In the account in 2 Kings xv but a passing statement is given on the war with Edom. The details are recorded in the present chapter. He gathered a large army and hired 100,000 mighty men of the kingdom of Israel. It was a hasty deed and showed that Amaziah was not acting in faith. A man of God appeared next and warned him to have nothing to do with the 100,000 hirelings, "for the Lord is not with Israel." This is a good test still in all undertakings. Every believer should ask before he enters upon anything: Can the Lord approve of it? Is the Lord with it? But Amaziah had already paid the hundred talents to the soldiers. So he asked about the money. And the man of God gave a beautiful answer. "The Lord is able to give thee much more than this." When-

ever believers face pecuniary losses on account of being true to the Lord and to His Word, they should remember that the Lord, who is thus honored, is able to make up for it and give much more. How many have found out that this is true! He dismissed the hirelings and Israel was angry. Cruel was Amaziah's deed done to the Edomites. After smiting 10,000 of them he took another 10,000 captive and brought them unto the top of the rock and cast them down so that they were broken in pieces. It was a horrible crime. The deed was committed in the wild regions of Selah or Petra (2 Kings xiv:7). Evidently Amaziah had become greatly impressed with the magnificent rock temples which he saw in Mount Seir. In their weird and grand temples the Edomites practised their abominable idol-worship with human sacrifices. Some of these "gods" of the children of Seir, Amaziah brought back from his expedition and set them up to be his gods. A prophet rebuked him with a statement of much force. And the king answered with a sneer and a threat, showing how hopeless was his case. Then the prophet became silent after he made the solemn declaration: "I know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this, and hast not hearkened to my counsel" (verses 15–16).

The comment on the war between Amaziah and the King of Israel is given in 2 Kings xiv, page 336. Amaziah was slain in Lachish.

The Reign of Uzziah.

CHAPTER XXVI.

1. The Beginning of his Reign. 1–5.
2. Uzziah's Success and Fortifications. 6–15.
3. Uzziah's Sin and Leprosy. 16–21.
4. The Death of Uzziah. 22–23.

The Son of Amaziah, Uzziah, in his sixteenth year, was made king by the people. In Second Kings xv he is called Azariah.* Isaiah was then prophet in Judah (Isaiah i:1).

*On page 337 in the annotations on 2 Kings xv:1–2 an explanation is given on this double name of Uzziah.

Isaiah's name is mentioned in verse 22. Hosea (Hosea i:1), Amos (Amos i:1) and Zechariah (2 Chronicles xxvi:5) were also prophets during his reign. The latter is not, of course, the Zechariah whose wonderful visions are written in the book which bears his name. Uzziah built Eloth and restored that important harbor to Judah (2 Kings xiv:22). From Eloth and Ezion-Geber Solomon's ships had gone to Ophir (1 Kings ix:26–28; 2 Chron. viii:17–18). Probably during the days of Joram (also called Jehoram) of Judah, when Edom revolted, Eloth also must have become independent. Uzziah did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. He sought God in the days of Zechariah, of whom we know nothing else but what is mentioned in verse 5. The Zechariah of Isaiah viii:2 cannot be identified with the Zechariah here, for the one mentioned by Isaiah lived much later. The better rendering of "who had understanding in the visions of God," is, "who was his (Uzziah's) instructor in the fear of God." Then follows the statement "as long as he sought the Lord, God made him prosper." And this is still true with all of God's people.

He waged a most successful warfare against the ancient foe of Israel, the Philistines. Previously, under the reign of Jehoram (2 Chron. xxi:16–17), as so often before, God had used the Philistines to chastise His people, but now He used Uzziah to punish them for their wickedness. Then the Ammonites brought gifts and Uzziah's fame spread as far as Egypt. A great restoration work was, after that, carried on by him; he restored and fortified the northern wall of Jerusalem, which had been broken down under Amaziah (2 Chron. xxv:23). Then there was a marked re-organization of the army of Judah and the defense of Jerusalem was greatly strengthened. "And his name spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped, till he was strong." Alas! for the next little word! How often we find it in Scripture. "But—!" "But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction, for he transgressed against the Lord his God, and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense." How solemn these words are!

What a warning they contain to all God's people! When the heart of man is lifted up, when pride is followed, transgression is not far behind. "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. i:32). How well it is for God's children to be much on their faces and humble themselves before the Lord. To be little in one's own eyes and make nothing of self is true greatness and the place of safety, where Satan stands defeated. And the danger of success and prosperity!

Uzziah invaded the priestly office which did not belong to him. It was a small matter to put some incense upon the altar. It was done in self-will and in defiance of the Lord's order and ordinance. It was a rejection of that office which foreshadowed the work of the true priest, our Lord Jesus Christ. And to-day in Christendom we see much of the same spirit, and that which is far worse, the total rejection of the Lord Jesus as sin-bearer and the great high priest. Uzziah became a leper and died a leper. He was buried as an outcast in the field and not in the sepulchres of the kings. In the year he died Isaiah had his great vision (Is. vi:1). Isaiah's opening chapters give a good description of the religious and moral condition of Judah at the close of Uzziah's reign.

The Reign of Jotham.

CHAPTER XXVII.

1. The Reign of Jotham. 1–6.
2. The Death of Jotham. 7–9.

The record of the reign of Jotham is brief in both 2 Kings and in Chronicles. He did also what was right in the sight of the Lord. The statement "howbeit he entered not into the temple of the Lord" means that he did not act as Uzziah, his father did, when he intruded into the functions of the priesthood. However, in spite of the good example of the king, the people continued in their departure from Jehovah. "And the people did yet corruptly." All the evils of a false worship continued and were not stopped. The state of the people is pictured by Isaiah in chapters

i–v and also in the book of the prophet Micah. These portions of the Word of God are needed to get a better understanding of the conditions which prevailed during the reign of Jotham. Jotham was a godly man and in his reign of sixteen years did much good. All his wars were successful. "He became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God." And this statement is the key of all his success and prosperity. He lived and walked in the presence of the Lord. He was guided, strengthened and kept by Him. And this is what all God's people need. It is still the way, the only way to blessing and success, to prepare our ways before the Lord. Jotham is one of the few Bible-characters of whom nothing evil is recorded. Yet the people over which he ruled continued in corruption and apostasy from God.

The Reign of Ahaz.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

1. The Record of his Reign. 1–4.
2. The Punishment of Ahaz. 5–8.
3. The Message of Oded and its Results. 9–15
4. Further Punishments of Ahaz. 16–25.
5. Death of Ahza. 26–27.

On Ahaz, his wicked reign and apostasy, as well as the war with Syria and the invasion of Judah by Israel, see our annotations on 2 Kings xvi. It was at that time that Isaiah ministered in Judah (Isa. vii). Pekah, the son of Remaliah, slew in one day 120,000 men "because they had forsaken the Lord their God." It was a terrible punishment which fell upon Ahaz. Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, slew the son of Ahaz, Maaseiah, also the governor and Elkanah, who was next to the king. A still larger number of Jews were taken captive. The interesting record of the prophet Oded is only given here in Chronicles. Who Oded was we do not know. He was a true and courageous prophet of Jehovah in the midst of idolatrous Samaria nearing so rapidly its predicted doom. Only a true prophet clothed with the Spirit of power could utter such a daring

message, which in a time of victory and enthusiasm was calculated to humble the people. And he made the demand, "deliver the captives again, which ye have taken captive of your brethren, for the fierce wrath of the Lord is upon you." It was the Word of the Lord, and they knew only too well that every word spoken was true, and the heads of Ephraim (the northern kingdom) were deeply impressed and convicted. They said, "Ye shall not bring the captives hither." They acknowledged that Israel had transgressed. "For our trespass is great, and there is fierce wrath against Israel." Then follows one of the beautiful scenes in Chronicles. This dark chapter is relieved by the mercy which was shown. "And the men which were expressed by name rose up, and took the captives, and with the spoil clothed all that were naked among them, and arrayed them, and gave them to eat and to drink, and anointed them, and carried all the feeble of them upon asses and brought them to Jericho, the city of palm trees, to their brethren." It reminds us of two passages in the New Testament: Luke x:30–37, the parable of the good Samaritan, and Matthew xxv:31–40. We leave the application which can be made with the reader. Ahaz and his alliance with Assyria as well as Ahaz's further idolatry are commented upon in Second Kings.*

6. Reformation under Hezekiah.

Chapters xxix–xxxii.

Hezekiah and the Beginning of the Revival.

CHAPTER XXIX.

1. The Record of his Reign. 1–2.
2. The Purification of the Temple. 3–19.
3. The Restored Worship. 20–30.
4. The Great Offerings. 31–36.

Compare chapters xxix–xxxii with 2 Kings xviii–xx and the annotations given there. The reformation which took place under the reign of the godly son of ungodly Ahaz was a thorough and remarkable one. He did right in the sight of the Lord, according to all his father David had done.

*See page 340–342 in this volume.

In the records of most of the former kings this phrase is missing. It shows that Hezekiah followed the ways of the man after God's own heart. His father had shut up the doors of the house of the Lord (xxviii:24). The first thing Hezekiah did was to open the doors and to repair them. And this was in the first year of his reign, in the first month. There was no delay; he began at once. He fully realized that, in order to have the Lord's presence and blessing, the work must begin at the sanctuary. It has been well said, that piety and the work of righteousness were manifested in Jehoshaphat; great energy and faith was displayed in Hezekiah; and we shall find in Josiah profound reverence for the Scriptures, for the book of the law. And such is the need of the professing church in the days of decline and apostasy. A revival of profound reverence for the Scriptures, and a whole hearted turning to the law and the testimony, the Word of God, is specially needed. Hezekiah gathered the priests and the Levites. In his great address he acknowledged the sins of the nation. Confession, as it always must, stands in the foreground. "For our fathers have trespassed, and done that which was evil in the eyes of the Lord our God, and have forsaken Him, and have taken away their faces from the habitation of the Lord, and turned their backs." For this reason the wrath of the Lord rested upon them. He called upon them to sanctify themselves and to carry forth the filth out of the holy place. As for himself, it was in his heart to make a covenant with the Lord. No doubt this had been made in secret in the presence of the Lord. Every true revival begins in this way.

The address and appeal found willing hearts among the servants of God. The Levites arose. The three leading families of Gershon, Kohath and Merari, were represented. Then there were two from the family of Elizaphan; two of the descendants of Asaph; two of Heman and two of Jedu-thun. They gathered their brethren and went into the inner part to cleanse it. They did not begin on the outside to work towards the inner part. All true work must begin in the inner part.

The true worship was restored and great offerings were brought. The praises they sung were the Psalms, "the words of David and Asaph the singer." Consult 2 Kings xviii on the abolishment of the idols and the destruction of the brazen serpent. Chronicles emphasizes the great restoration work of the temple, in harmony with its priestly character.

The Passover.

CHAPTER XXX.

1. Preparations for the Great Passover. 1–14.
2. The Celebration of the Passover. 15–22.
3. The Concluding Festive Days. 23–27.

The Passover is next celebrated. It was, so to speak, the birthday of the nation, and typified the great redemption by the blood of the true Passover-Lamb. It had not been kept for a long time and as the proper yearly time for its celebration had passed, the first month, they concluded to keep it in the second month. The law had made provision for that and therefore what they did was according to the Word (see Num. ix:6–13 and the annotations given there). And the king recognized the unity of the people of God and their need. Therefore he sent letters to all Israel and Judah, also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the Lord, to keep the passover unto the Lord God of Israel. The posts went with the letters throughout the entire land. The letter in itself is beautiful and was addressed to the children of Israel, not mentioning the sad division which had taken place. A considerable part of the house of Israel, the ten tribes, had already been carried into captivity. The letter reached, therefore, only the remnant which escaped out of the hand of the Kings of Assyria (verse 6; 2 Kings xv:19; 1 Chron. v:26). It was the Spirit of God who would bring all the people of God together around the table of the great feast. He always unites God's people. And the posts passing along even unto Zebulun with the God-given message of the king, were treated by some of the remnant with mock-

ery. But others humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem. Without such humbling a coming together of the people of God is not possible.

The great feast then was kept by the great multitude after they had taken away the false altars. They killed the passover. The priests sprinkled the blood, which they had received from the Levites. Many of them who had come were not cleansed; Hezekiah prayed for them. "The good Lord pardon every one." And the Lord hearkened and healed the people, so that the divine threat was not carried out (Lev. xv:31). The feast of unleavened bread was also kept for the appointed seven days with great gladness; yet throughout the days of gladness and remembering Jehovah confession was made to the Lord (verse 22). Everything shows that the Spirit of God was in the great revival. Other festive days followed with more gladness. The king gave great gifts and the princes did likewise, while a great number of priests gave their continued service. Not since the days of Solomon, when he had dedicated the house and reigned over Israel, had Jerusalem seen anything like it. The whole scene ended by the priests blessing the people (Num. vi:23–26). Heaven heard and rejoiced with His people.

Dispensationally the great revival foreshadows what will take place when the King of Israel will occupy the throne and reign, when all Israel is united and back in the land (Ezek. xxxvii), when His people will worship and praise the Holy One of Israel.

The Results of the Revival.

CHAPTER XXXI.

1. The Destruction of the False Worship. 1.
2. The King's Appointments. 2–21.

All was done by Hezekiah for the orderly continuance of the service in the house of the Lord. The order of the courses of the priests, after David's arrangement, which had been abandoned during the preceding apostasy, was once more settled. What was needed for the public sacrifices

of the congregation was willingly given, as well as other things, by the king and the people.

"For the personal support of the ministering priests and Levites nothing more was required than the re-enactment of the ancient provision of firstfruits, tithes, and firstlings (Ex. xxiii:19; Num. xviii: 12, 21, etc.; Lev. xxvii:30–33). These, together with 'the tithe of dedicated things' (Lev. xxvii:30; Deut. xiv:28), were now offered in such quantity as not only to suffice for the wants of the priesthood, but to leave a large surplusage, to the thankful joy and surprise of Hezekiah and the princes. In answer to the king's inquiry the high-priest Azariah explained that the large store accumulated was due to the special blessing bestowed by the Lord on a willing and obedient people (2 Chron. xxxi:5–10). The collection of this store began in the third month—that of Pentecost—when the wheat harvest was completed, and it ended in the seventh month—that of Tabernacles, which marked the close of the fruit harvest and of the vintage. And these contributions, or dues, came not only from Judah, but also from 'the children of Israel' (ver. 6); that is, from those in the northern kingdom who had joined their brethren in returning to the service and the law of their Lord.

"For the storage of these provisions, Hezekiah ordered that certain chambers in the Temple should be prepared, and he appointed officials, who are named in the sacred text, alike for the supervision and the administration of these stores (verses 11–19). Again and again it is noted with what 'faithfulness' one and the other duty were discharged by each in the special department assigned to him (verses 12, 15, 18)."

Such were the results of the revival produced by the Spirit of God. A united people, the destruction of all false worship, the restoration of Jehovah's worship, great willingness in giving and much sacrifice, obedience to the Lord and to His Word. Such must be the results of every true revival among God's people. Great is the record of the good King Hezekiah: "He sought his God, he did it with all his heart, he prospered."

Sennacherib's Invasion; the Deliverance; the Passing of Hezekiah.

CHAPTER XXXII.

1. Sennacherib's Invasion. 1–2.
2. The King's Counsel and Trust in God. 3–8.
3. Sennacherib's Threatening and Arrogance. 9–16.
4. Sennacherib's Defiance of God. 17–19.
5. Hezekiah's and Isaiah's Prayer. 20.
6. The Deliverance. 21–23.
7. Hezekiah's Illness, Pride and Departure. 24–33.

As this part of Hezekiah's history is also found in 2 Kings xviii–xx and we have given already the necessary annotations in connection with these chapters, we do not repeat them here. His prayer and Isaiah's ministry are reported in Second Kings and omitted in Chronicles. So are the details of his illness, his prayer, Isaiah's comforting words, and the details of his failure when he exposed his wealth to the ambassadors. The account of the defiance of Sennacherib's servants is also very much condensed in Chronicles. Both 2 Kings xix–xx and 2 Chronicles xxxii must be read together. But we find also additions here. Notably among these are the beautiful words of Hezekiah. After he had done all in his power in defence of the city, cutting off the water, building walls, raising up towers, making darts and shields, appointing captains, he uttered his comforting message. "Be strong and courageous, be not afraid or dismayed for the King of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him, for there be more with us than with him.* With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles." No wonder the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah. They are good and helpful words to rest upon in faith in all our warfare down here.

*See 2 Kings vi:16. No doubt the king had a record of the events of Elisha's ministry and words.

7. Decline and Apostasy under Manasseh and Amon.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

1. Manasseh's Wicked Reign. 1–10.
2. Manasseh's Imprisonment and Restoration. 11–13.
3. His Reign after Restoration and His Death. 14–20.
4. The Reign of Amon. 21–25.

Manasseh, the twelve year old son of Hezekiah, did not follow the ways of his father, but did evil in the sight of the Lord. He had no godly Jehoiada, like Joash, to stand by him and guide him. He was surrounded, no doubt, by counsellors, but they were evil counsellors. Instead of following the example of his father, he followed that of his wicked grandfather Ahaz. In reading the record of his evil doings we get the impression that he hasted in undoing all his father had done. The corrupt worship on the heights was restored by him, and he added at the same time the Phoenician rites of Baal and Asherah, the Chaldean worship of the host of heaven (the sun and the stars). The altars for this wicked worship were placed in the outer and inner courts of the house of the Lord. More than that, he set a carved image in the house of God. This was an image of an idol; the vilest, unnameable practices were introduced into the place which was to be holy. "And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of Hinnom." As we saw in Second Kings, his grandfather Ahaz was the first one to introduce this horrible Canaanitish custom in Judah.* The sins of the Sodomites were openly practiced.

"Alike the extent and the shameless immorality of the idolatry now prevalent, may be inferred from the account of the later reformation by Josiah (2 Kings xxiii:4–8). For, whatever practices may have been introduced by previous kings, the location, probably in the outer court of the Temple, of a class of priests, who, in their unnaturalness of vice, combined a species of madness with deepest moral degradation, and by their side, and in fellowship with them,

*See page 340 and foot-note there.

that of priestesses of Astarte, must have been the work of Manasseh."*

Then there were enchantments, witchcraft and wizards, and he dealt also with a familiar spirit. This was demon-power manifested as it is to-day in Spiritualism and similar cults. So wicked was his work that he made Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen whom the Lord had destroyed before the children of Israel (verse 9). "Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much till he filled Jerusalem from one end to another" (2 Kings xxi:16). "And the Lord spake to Manasseh, and to his people, but they hearkened not" (Verse 10). God's prophets bore faithful witness against these awful deeds. Isaiah, Jewish tradition claims, suffered martyrdom under Manasseh's reign. But though the Lord sent His messages, they did not hear. In 2 Kings xxi:10–15, we have preserved the message which the Lord sent by His servants the prophets. But Second Kings has nothing to say of the conversion and restoration of this wicked man, one of the greatest miracles of grace on record. The King of Assyria came and bound Manasseh in fetters and carried him to Babylon. A certain class of higher critics, a number of years ago, used to sneer at this record, and denied its historicity because it is entirely missing in the Book of Kings.

"It was called in question for this reason, that there was not ground for believing that the Assyrians exercised supremacy in Judah—far less that there had been a hostile expedition against Manasseh; and because, since the residence of the Assyrian kings was in Nineveh, the reported transportation of Manasseh to Babylon (verse 11) must be unhistorical. To these were added, as secondary objections, that the unlikely account of a king transported in iron bonds and fetters was proved to be untrustworthy by the still more incredible notice that such a captive had been again restored to his kingdom."

But these objections have been completely refuted by an Assyrian monument. On this monument the Assyrian

*Dr. Edersheim.

King is pictured leading two captives with hooks and rings. The inscription runs as follows: "I transported to Assyria men and women . . . innumerable." Among other names given is the name "*Minasi sar matir Jaudi*" which means "Manasseh, King of Judah." Then carried away, no doubt much disgrace and suffering put upon him, his conscience awakened. He humbled himself and prayed and found mercy. What a manifestation of Divine mercy! Jewish tradition often refers to Manasseh's conversion as the greatest encouragement to repentant sinners. Such mercy will yet be shown to the remnant of Israel, when they turn unto the Lord "whose mercy endureth forever." And the evidences of the genuineness of the conversion of Manasseh are not lacking. He acted faithfully after his return and repaired the altar and commanded Judah to serve the Lord God.

The utter corruption of human nature is seen in the case of his son Amon. With the awful experience of his father before him, and no doubt exhorted by Manasseh to serve the Lord and be true to Him, he followed deliberately the bad example of his father's idolatry. He trespassed more and more and did not repent like his father Manasseh, but died in his sins. Under his reign the wickedness reached a higher mark than under any previous king.

8. Reformation under Josiah.

Chapters xxxiv–xxxv.

The Reign of Josiah and the Reformation.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

1. The Record of his Reign. 1–2.
2. The Beginning of the Reformation. 3–7.
3. The House of the Lord Repaired. 8–13.
4. The Law of Moses Found and Read. 14–21.
5. Hulda, the Prophetess. 22–28.
6. The Law Read and the Covenant. 29–33.

The contents of this chapter are found also in Second Kings, chapters xxii–xxiii:30. Inasmuch as this has been

covered by our annotation, we do not need to repeat it here. However, we add a paragraph from the "Synopsis of the Bible."

"We find in Josiah a tender heart, subject to the word, and a conscience that respected the mind and will of God: only at last he had too much confidence in the effect of this to secure blessing from God, without the possession of that faith which gives intelligence in His ways to understand the position of God's people. God, however, makes use of this confidence to take Josiah away from the evil He was preparing in the judgments which were to fall upon Judah, the knowledge of which should have made Josiah walk more humbly. At the age of sixteen he began by the grace of God to seek Jehovah; and at twenty he had acquired the moral strength necessary for acting with energy against idolatry, which he destroyed even unto Naphtali. We see here how sovereign grace came in; for both Hezekiah and Josiah were the sons of extremely wicked fathers.

"Having cleansed the land from idolatry, Josiah begins to repair the temple; and there the book of the law was found. The king's conscience, and his heart also, are bowed under the authority of the word of his God. He seeks for the prophetic testimony of God with respect to the state in which he sees Israel to be, and God makes known to him by Huldah the judgment about to fall upon Israel; but tells him at the same time that his eyes shall not see the evil."

The Keeping of the Passover and Josiah's Death.

CHAPTER XXXV.

1. The Passover Kept. 1–19.
2. The Death of Josiah. 20–27.

In the eighteenth year of his reign, Josiah, like his great-grandfather Hezekiah, kept the Passover. No doubt the reading of the Law had made this feast once more an urgent necessity. Moreover they had made a solemn covenant "to walk after the Lord, to keep His commandments, His testimonies and His statutes, and to perform the words of

the covenant written in the book." Therefore in the appointed time, on the fourteenth day of the first month,* they kept the memorial feast, the last before the house of Judah was carried into captivity. And all was done by the godly king "according to the Word of the Lord"—"as it is written in the Book of Moses." It was obedience to the Word. And such an obedience is needed in the days of decline in the professing church. It is this which pleases God. The passover kept was even greater than that of Hezekiah (verse 18). All Judah and Israel (those who were still left) kept the great feast.

The death of this excellent man and King of Judah has its lessons. The King of Egypt, who was Necho, also called Pharaoh-Necho, came up to fight against Charchemish by Euphrates (see page 358). Josiah went out against him. But did Josiah ask counsel of the Lord? Was the good man guided by the Lord when he went out against Necho, who did not intend to attack Judah? The evidence is conclusive that Josiah acted of himself and was not directed by the Lord. The Egyptian king rebuked him. Necho had not come against Judah. God had commanded him to make haste and fight against Assyria. Josiah should have known what the prophets had announced about Assyria and its overthrow. Thus Necho sent his ambassadors to give a warning. Necho was on a mission which he knew was of God. Josiah opposed him. "Forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that He destroy thee not." But he gave no heed. The king who had cleansed Jerusalem and Judah, who had repaired the temple, obeyed the word and kept the Passover, neglected to ask the Lord in this matter and then continued in the wrong course. Perhaps pride played here also an important part. It would have greatly humbled him if he had desisted from his uncalled for warfare. How all this has been repeated and is being repeated in the individual experience of Christians needs hardly to be pointed out. Many who were much used

*Hezekiah's Passover was kept in the second month. Chapter xxx:2–3.

like Josiah, stumbled and fell, when they ceased to depend on the Lord and acted in self-will. Like Ahab (2 Chron. xviii:29) he disguised himself. The arrow found him as it was with Ahab. He was pierced in the valley of Megiddo; he died in Jerusalem. There was great lamentation. The lamentations of Jeremiah are not the lamentations as we possess them in the book which bears that name. Jeremiah, however, refers to him (Jer. xxii:10–13; Lam. iv:20). In Zechariah xii:10–14 the lamentation in the valley of Megiddo is mentioned. It is connected there prophetically with another lamentation for another son of David, who was pierced. And He, our Lord, was pierced and wounded for our transgression. When He comes again to fill the throne of His father David, the people shall mourn for Him, but in a different way as they mourned for Josiah. Josiah was the last good king of the house of David who reigned. But there is another one coming who shall rule in righteousness (Is. xxxii:1).

9. The Final Decline and Apostasy.

CHAPTER XXXVI:1–14.

1. Jehoahaz's Reign. 1–7.
2. Jehoiachin's Brief Reign. 8–10.
3. Zedekiah. 11–14.

As the complete record of these three final rulers is given in the Second Book of Kings, the annotations were made there. See pages 358–364 of this volume. Nothing needs to be added. It was the final plunge before the awful judgment overtook Jerusalem and Judah. And there will be a final plunge into apostasy in connection with the professing church, before the predicted judgment with the coming of our blessed Lord will end this present evil age and usher in His glorious kingdom.

IV. The Captivity and the Epilogue.

CHAPTER XXXVI:15–23.

1. The Captivity. 15–21.
2. The Epilogue. 22–23.

In infinite patience the Lord still waited for the return of His people. Judgment is His strange work, but He delighteth in mercy. He sent them messengers who exhorted them and brought the messages of God, because He had compassion. But they mocked the messengers, despised God's gracious offers and misused His prophets, till there was no remedy. An awful statement! Apostasy and defiance of God increased to such an extent, till there was no remedy. The threatening clouds of judgment broke at last and the people were carried away into the captivity. "To fulfill the Word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths, for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath to fulfil three-score and ten years." And this age too is, with its rejection of God's best, approaching a day when there will be no remedy and the judgment will fall.

The epilogue takes us after the seventy year captivity. Cyrus had been named by Isaiah almost two hundred years before he was born (Is. xliv:28). God accomplished His purpose through this Persian king. We shall follow his history in Ezra and his work and what it foreshadows in Isaiah.